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**TRANSLATION OF HUMOUR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE
CARTOONS IN 'LEMAN' AND OTHER POPULAR WEEKLY HUMOUR
MAGAZINES OF TURKEY**

Orhun Yakın

PhD

The University of Warwick

Centre for British and Comparative Cultural Studies

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SUMMARY

In this dissertation, the various strategies of humour translation have been analysed by taking various cartoons with speech bubbles from the popular Turkish humour weekly magazine *Leman* and other similar publications. Generally considered as an extremely problematic, sometimes next to impossible, task within the translation studies, humour translation requires and deserves special attention since, as it was explained in the related sections, it may unite or separate people within the context of one single joke. As we also have stated elsewhere in the text, the description of both humour and translation, as two separate concepts, are not available in certain and decisive terms. This is especially true for the concept of humour which also covers the areas of laughter, jokes, wit, satire, irony and many others which are all interchangeable with each other. This fact makes an all-round definition very difficult. We also tried to show that, the visual humour or the visual aspect of humour could be a valuable asset for a foreign recipient who genuinely wishing to understand humour products from a different and remote culture. We wanted to show, and to some extent share, that the cartoons, provided they are not strictly political or crammed with regional issues and accents, could be fathomed by an outsider with the help of a decent translation and an adequate amount of contextual and cultural background information. We have assumed, from the very beginning of this project, that the contemporary Turkish humour, particularly cartoons that are represented in *Leman* and other similar publications, was interesting enough to become a dissertation subject, particularly those with stock types or characters since they have the potential of becoming snapshots of a country which is still

considered as alien (or other) by the West. As far as this writer concerned, the main points of interest concerning Turkey by the British public could roughly be summarised in two points: a bargain trip to the seaside during the summer season and some occasional football matches Manchester United plays against Turkish teams in Istanbul. Especially the latter always attracts heavy press coverage during and after a match. We wanted to show that there are other cultural aspects exist in Turkey as well and such aspects could be transferred to other cultures by ways of translation. The material we have chosen is both visual and prose at the same time and although they function as a unity, they also complement each other. It is proposed that, although a perfect translation is always a desirable concept in almost every field, the translation of humour is possible within certain frameworks. The visual side of cartoons, as in situation comedies, contributes immensely to the comprehension of the message, which should be considered as the most important feature of the joke. To this end, a variety of cartoons are selected from both *Leman* and other similar humour weeklies and translated with an adequate amount of background and contextual information that provided beforehand. This background information also includes, as far as the material in question permits, a close analysis of the language and the subject matter. To provide a better insight for the reader, a summary of Turkish humour and humour magazines are added alongside a section on the issue of humour itself.

In 1968 and 1969, "The Joke" was translated into all the Western languages. But what surprises! In France, the translator rewrote the novel by ornamenting my style. In England, the publisher cut out all the reflective passages, eliminated the musicological chapters, changed the order of the parts, recomposed the novel. Another country: I meet my translator, a man who knows not a word of Czech. "Then how did you translate it?" "With my heart." And he pulls a photo of me from his wallet.

Milan Kundera, 1988

There is no surer way of killing a joke than explaining it.

E.H.Gombrich

"What is it you really want of us, of my mother and me?"

"What I want of you all," he said. "That you make me flesh!" and, imitating the band, it began to sign these words over and over, and shake the objects in the room to the rhythm as it were of a drum, until I put my hands over my ears and begged for mercy.

"Laughter," he said. "Laughter."

"Which means what?" I asked.

"I am laughing at you because I too can make music to make you rock."

I laughed. "You're right," I said. "And you say this word, because you cannot actually laugh."

"Just so," he said, petulantly. "When I am flesh I shall laugh again."

Anne Rice, *Lasher*

"B-b-but," Huru said. "making images is ter-ter-terr... it's very bad." She meant that making images consigns the maker into the everlasting fires, but that was quite a mouthful for Huru, for who going to Hell was a much simpler task.

"It's not making images that's a sin, Sweet Idiot," the Physician corrected his daughter.

"Making images is in the nature of man, a gift from God, so that man may celebrate God's creation. The more true the image, the more blessed the maker. Got that? Good. Remember, the sinful maker is the incompetent maker."

Gürelî Gün, *On the Road to Baghdad*

A plurality of languages and societies: each language is a view of the world, each civilisation is a world.

Octavio Paz, *Translation: Literature and Letters*

We at Les Editions Pre-Presse Inc. believe that your fine humour deserve the best, most comprehensive attention so that your potential French audience will find it as funny as you do. We believe so strongly that WE are the ones to give it that attention that we are willing to give you *two*-hour of translation work (that's cent-wingt minutes)- Free! Just try us once-on us. If you are satisfied then come back for more. You will find our rates reasonable and our turn around time excellent (we all use swivel chairs). If you don't like the work, alors tant pis pour vous.

(www.edpp.comedy/trans/index)

INTRODUCTION

One of the reasons behind the preparation of this dissertation is similar to the advice that the translator Venuti received from a more experienced colleague. This advice was concerning a possible strategy to select material for possible translation projects that Venuti himself was considering. His colleague recommended him to choose and translate (Italian) materials by writers of his own generation. His reasoning behind this preference was that 'when author and translator live in the same historical moment, they are more likely to share a common sensibility, and this is highly desirable in translation because it increases the fidelity of the translated text to the original.'¹ His colleague also drew Venuti's attention to the word 'simpatico' and stated that 'if the translator and the author are *simpatico*, "to possess an underlying sympathy", then the translator would be expected to work much better. As Venuti himself concludes, 'the translator should not merely get along with the author, not merely find him likeable; there should also be an identity between them.'²

This writer himself, in parallel with the advice provided by Venuti's colleague above, has witnessed of a period that later gave birth to contemporary humour scene today in Turkey. He lived through the period when *Gırgır* was the epicentre of humour magazines. Lastly, he is living in the same historical moment with *Leman* (and other humour magazines) while it is still continuing its publication as the leader of humour magazines in Turkey.

For many years, the writer built up a large collection of *Leman* and other yellow-paged magazines in the same vein. For a long time, he got into the habit of

¹ Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Visibility: A History of Translation*, (London and New York: Routledge. 1995). p.273. (emphasis as in the original)

observing those cartoonists' artistic and personal development. As he learned later, it was actually the most convenient way of approaching those works and their creators. He also observed that, as a result of a special bond between the cartoonist and his readers, it almost became a norm for a reader to send his/her jokes or just a rough idea to the artist for his consideration for publication without demanding anything in return. Yet, they have always been rewarded with a personal reply or acknowledgement squeezed somewhere in the frame.

The other important reason that led him to translate these cartoons in the first place was personal. During his first months in England, he regularly received copies of various humour magazines, especially *Leman* from Turkey. He soon came to realise that it was relatively easy for him to follow what was going on in Turkey just by browsing through those pages. There were many cartoons, enhanced by various press cuttings inserted into them, which acted as contextual background providers. Moreover, especially in *Leman*, there were various articles offering different point of views on almost any subject. After establishing the idea of rendering those cartoons with speech balloons into English, he prepared few examples for his supervisor, Professor Bassnett. She appreciated the jokes in all of them except the following one

² Ibid., p.273.



The translation of the speech balloon was "Oh, no! We've left scissors running..!" was adequate enough and it was hoped that the visual part of the joke would be self explanatory for the comprehension of that particular joke. Upon this obvious failure, the writer prepared a compact contextual information for his advisor including an essential information that due to frequent and unannounced water cuts in many metropolitan areas, it was a common practice for people to leave their taps on for long periods in order to hear the sound of water when it was provided again and then they would try to save water as much as they could until the next cut. The only foreseeable risk of such a 'practice' was a number of mini torrents all over the place due to forgetfulness of people. After this explanation, the intended joke of the cartoon became clear. The necessity for this kind of background/contextual explanation for a better appreciation of some humorous material coming from an another culture stuck with the writer and it was right after this occasion that he came across a copy of *Newsweek*.

0.1. The Importance of Background Information

" I think that I shall have a whisky and soda and a cigar after all this cross-questioning. I had formed my conclusions as to the case before our client came into the room."

" My dear Holmes!"

" I have notes of several similar cases, though none, as I remarked before, which were quite as prompt. My whole examination served to turn my conjecture into a certainty. Circumstantial evidence is occasionally very convincing, as when you find a trout in the milk, to quote Thoreau's example."

" But I have heard all that you have heard."

" Without, however, *the knowledge of pre-existing cases* which serves me so well."³

One of the most influential weekly newsmagazines in America, *Newsweek*, presented its readers with a selection of 'political cartoons'⁴ in the shape of an eleven pages long supplement. *Newsweek* had collected these cartoons from various sources in order to provide its readers a recap for the year 1995.⁵ These 20 cartoons, as the magazine called them, were gathered under the title of 'Perspectives 1995'. The topics of the cartoons ranged from Princess Diana's televised confessions to the live broadcast trial of O.J. Simpson and to the tragedy in Bosnia. One common characteristic in all these cartoons was that, without exception they were all with captions or speech balloons.

0. 2. The Transmission of the Message

The reason behind the description of some cartoons in that particular issue of *Newsweek* was to emphasis the importance of visual and background information and/or context in order to grasp the intended humour. The starting

³ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor' from *The Original Illustrated 'Strand' Sherlock Holmes*. The Complete Facsimile Edition. (Ware: Wordsworth Editions. 1996), p.250 (emphasis added)

⁴ This term is not exactly adequate since not all the cartoons included in this collection, as it is shown in our selections, are 'political' in their strictest sense.

⁵ *Newsweek*, December 25, 1995/ January 1, 1996. 'Perspectives 1995', pp.41-52. In addition, during the course of writing, *Newsweek* published another group of cartoons under the title of

point is that *Newsweek* is an international publication and its readers receive almost an identical copy of the original American issue each week.⁶ It is expected that a typical reader of a world wide and respectable international newsmagazine published mainly in English, should be someone aware of the global and domestic issues. This of audience profile, although not a complete one, is one of the important factors in analysing and translating humour. Another factor to be considered in this case is the language. There are a few regional editions of *Newsweek* but rest of the world receives the magazine in English language. Although sometimes it seems difficult to see the reasons behind the world-wide dominance of English⁷, it is estimated that by the year 2000 one and a half billion people will speak English and for 1.1 billion people it will become a second or third language essential to both their professional and their personal lives. However, in some cases, being able to read and talk in English or any other language adequately, may not be enough. Of course it is possible to reach a standard of understanding and using English language but to grasp little but important details behind the usage would require more effort from the foreign user. It is also true that culture-specific norms and codes in any language can not completely be mastered and decoded unless one is personally and intimately involved in that specific culture for some considerable time and even this would

'Perspectives 1996' in January 6, 1997, pp.35-51. I have no information about the availability of previous *Newsweek* editions in this vein preceding the December 1995 issue.

⁶ Sometimes there are differences on the covers of overseas editions and advertisements inside.

⁷ As James Geary states, the situation seems rather strange since 'the grammar of the English is complicated, the pronunciation eccentric, and the spelling peculiar to say the least.' But according to David Crystal, the author of the *Cambridge Encyclopaedia of the English Language*, 'A language becomes powerful when a nation becomes powerful. This power may be military or cultural or economic-or in the case of the U.S., arbiter of world English, all the above. Wave dollar bills in front of someone and they will learn complicated spellings and grammar.' 'Sowing the Seeds of Speech' from 'Speaking in Tongues' in *Time*, (July 1997). pp.52-58

not be a total guarantee for a perfect understanding of a particular message delivered either in written or oral forms.

As Tamoka and Takahashi state in their introduction to their study in which they tried to analyse the degree of understanding humour from another culture by a group of Japanese university students for whom English is their second language

Humour is typically grounded in a cultural and social context. Therefore, an understanding of humour often requires more than a knowledge of the language in which the humour is written...although students can intellectually comprehend the meaning of humorous sentences, they cannot actually sense why they are funny. This difficulty in humour comprehension could be caused by *a lack of prior knowledge concerning its social and cultural context*.⁸

0.3. Contextual Information

It is important to see how a joke cartoon operates in order to understand the translations of the cartoons in *Leman* and some other Turkish humour magazines. As Kemnitz explains

Joke cartoons rely upon -and help to perpetuate- a number of social attitudes and stereotypes, many of them relatively trivial, such as that of the woman driver. They generally do not address themselves to the important social questions but frequently comment upon the workings out of social problems.⁹

As Mc Cloud explains, 'cartooning is a form of amplification through simplification and when a cartoonist abstract an image he eliminates details as he is focusing on specific details.'¹⁰ Of course in pictures, the level of abstraction varies. As will be seen in the following example 'by stripping down an image to

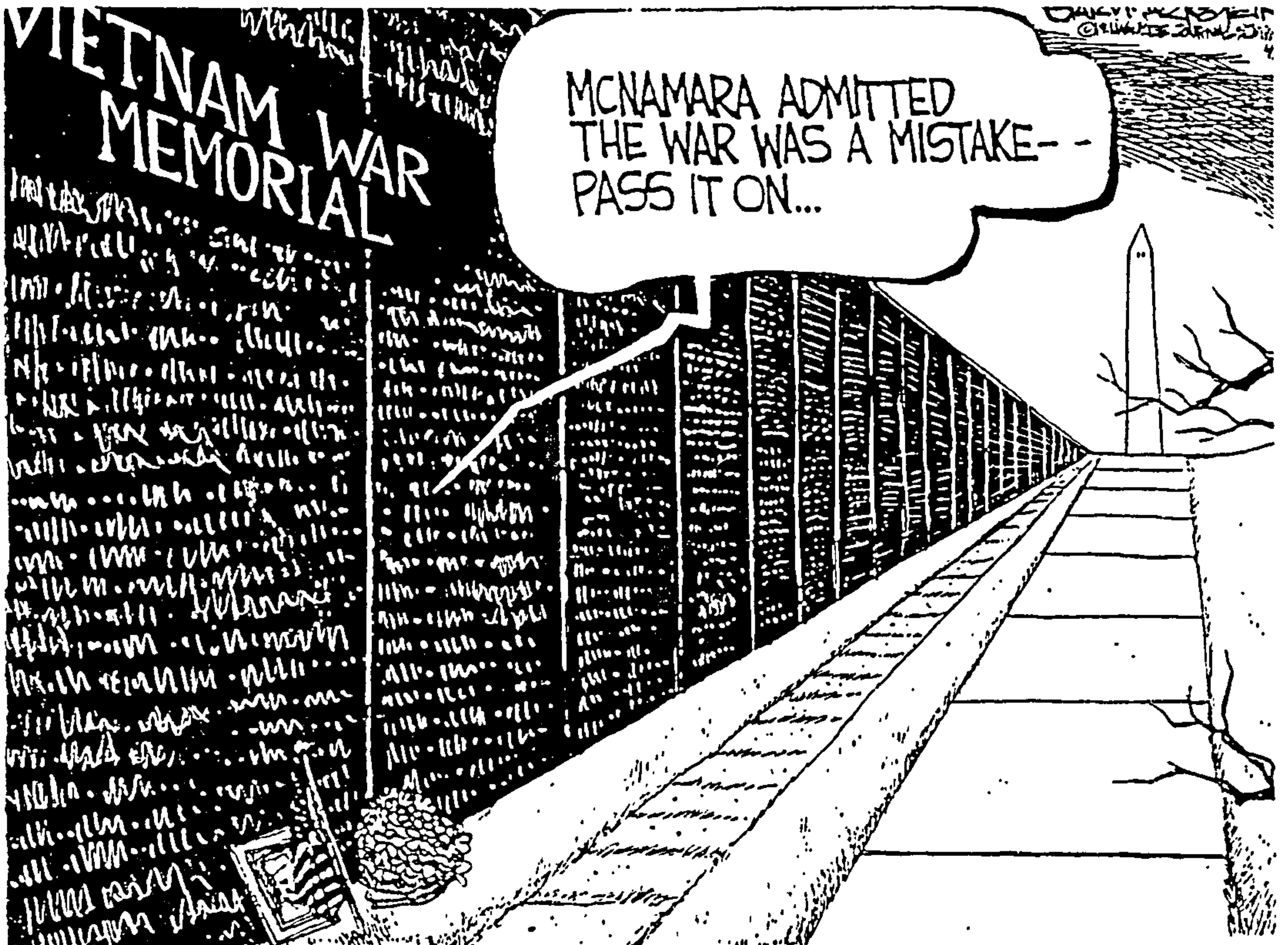
⁸ Katsuo Tamaoka and Toshiaki Takahashi, 'Understanding Humour from Another Culture: Comprehension of Parental Brain Twisters by Japanese University Students Learning English as a Second Language', *Psychologia*, 37 (1994), 150-157. (emphasis added)

⁹ Thomas Milton Kemnitz, 'The Cartoon as a Historical Source', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* IV:I (Summer 1973), 81-93.

¹⁰ Scott Mc Cloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, (New York: HarperPerennial, 1994), p.29.

its essential 'meaning' an artist can amplify that meaning in a way that realistic art cannot.¹¹

Let us now consider this cartoon taken from *Newsweek's* humour supplement, which is dealing with the issue of the Vietnam War and its aftermath, in order to make our argument more clear.



Our imaginary reader from Ukraine would find it difficult to understand or appreciate the humour fully in this particular cartoon (picture 2), in which a particular McNamara (not visible) who admits that the war was a mistake, without having a memory of an elephant or a degree in American history.

As seen in the cartoon, the only visual clue given to the audience is the name of the place/setting inscribed on the black monument. The picture is completely free from any living being, human or animal, and everything visible to the eye is motionless. We see a speech balloon that explains the story for us. It is also the source for intended humour. In a supernatural fashion, one spiritual being

¹¹ Ibid.. p.30.

announces the current news and wants it to be passed to the others. If one is familiar enough with the monuments scattered around Washington D.C, U.S.A, it would also be possible to recall that obelisk on the horizon that was often seen in many movies which include the city. As a part of cartoon, it has no significant role over the message. In fact, it could be said that the whole cartoon produces no humour at all in term's broadest usage. Its aim is not to provoke laughter for its intended readers but direct them towards a rethink and remind them what has happened and its aftermath.

It is a kind of cartoon created for a specific purpose rather than to arouse laughter. One other speciality of this cartoon is that it is especially aimed at the reader in the U.S in order to evoke reaction. It could be classified as a **cartoon of opinion** whose main purpose is to "sum up" situations. The element of irony may be present but it is not an essential part of it. Along with this line of argument, we could say that this particular cartoon gives a summation of the Vietnam War and emphasis on its aftermath. It was an important war with considerably grievous results for the US. Everyone would appreciate the seriousness of this war and its outcome but some people would appreciate it more than others: the Americans.

The main reason for this is the American consciousness, which was deeply affected by such a horrible event and human loss. They would inevitably show a different reaction to a cartoon like this than someone in another part of the world.

Yet, there are some basic facts a reader from overseas should be familiar before approaching this cartoon such as figures and names as follows

During the war more than 58,000 Americans have lost their lives. The war cost the U.S over \$150 billion. The inflation caused by the war racked the U.S. economy for the next eight-year and that the U.S never lost a major battle proved irrelevant. The surname mentioned in the cartoon,

McNamara, is Mr. Robert Strange McNamara who was the U.S Secretary of Defense during the ascent of the Vietnam War.¹²

It is also another fact that there are still relatives of those who died or were lost during the course of Vietnam War continue to live in the U.S. They would probably show a strong emotional reaction to a cartoon that would make them more tense. It is also interesting to note that the inscription on the black monument is misquoted by the cartoonist.¹³

The important point is that, *Newsweek* decided to keep and publish this cartoon along with others in its overseas editions. Instead of removing this cartoon (probably some others in similar vein) from its overseas editions to avoid possible confusion and misunderstandings due to cultural and social differences, the magazine opted for their inclusion in the supplement. What would be the intention behind *Newsweek's* choice and inclusion of these cartoons for its international readers? A likely answer would be that particular cartoon and others in similar vein have been chosen as a part of a big presupposition. The *Newsweek* might have supposed that the majority of its readers, regardless of their different backgrounds and nationalities, would be able to relate to that cartoon and others because they were thought as relevant to *Newsweek* readers.¹⁴

¹² From the New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia, 1993.

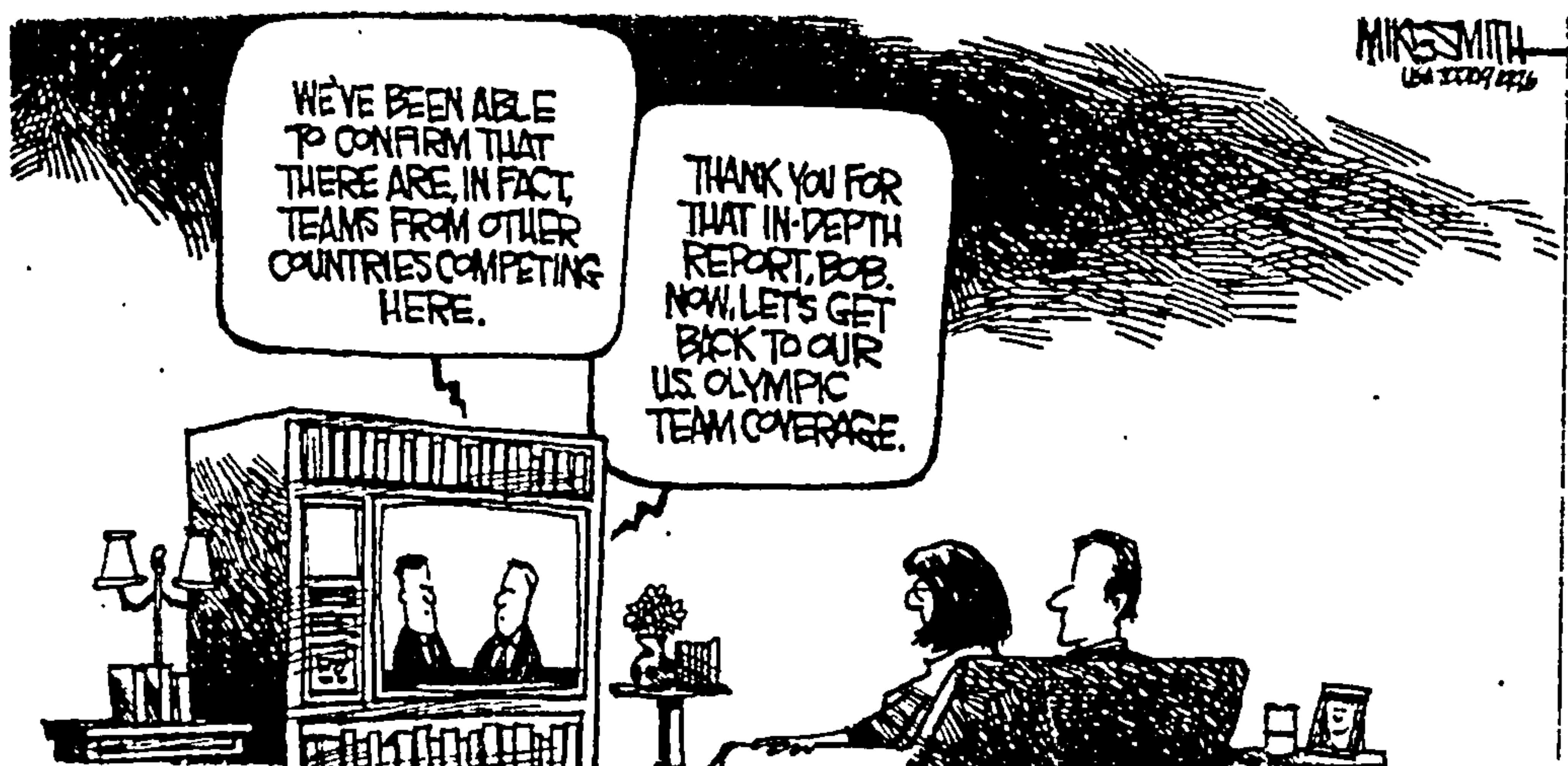
¹³ In all the sources we have checked, the name of the memorial was quoted as *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. A quite controversial project at the time, it was privately funded and opened in 1982 and later officially accepted in 1984 by President Ronald Reagan.

¹⁴ It would be interesting to give an example from contemporary Turkish media. Zülfü Livaneli is a famous folk singer and a well-known name in Turkish politics. He occupies a regular column in a daily broadsheet newspaper in which he deals with political and cultural issues. Livaneli defended himself due to some negative feed back from some of his readers. It became evident that those readers could not understand what he was talking about in some of his writings due to their lack of (general?) knowledge concerning some concepts and words he was employing. One of the terms in question was Sisyphus. In his defence, Livaneli stated that people with different backgrounds would regularly visit his column and this would effect the way they would evaluate his writings. He also added that there are probably thousands of people in Turkey who are familiar with Albert Camus and the Myth of Sisyphus. It is evident that Livaneli, like countless other writers around the world, has a general idea or assumption about his readership profile in mind.

It is probable to assume that *Newsweek* does not consider the fact that an average reader from overseas might require additional background information to appreciate the joke, if any, in the cartoon.

What could be the possible reason behind this decision? The likely idea behind presenting such a collection is that by recapping and/or summarising the whole year for its readers by giving them a group of cartoons *Newsweek*, intentionally or unintentionally, has tried to unite people with different cultural backgrounds and countries under the roof of humour.¹⁵

On the other hand, a considerable negative criticism for the American television coverage during the 1996 Atlanta Olympics in British daily newspaper *Independent* might be useful to provide us with an alternative insight into the usage of cartoons and the need of background information in order to appreciate them.¹⁶ The article in question deals with the highly patriotic and one-sided Olympics coverage by the American television company NBC. For the article, *The Independent* used an accompanying cartoon taken from the daily press in the US to reflect the absurdity of the situation (picture 3).



¹⁵ All my efforts to learn more about the selection policy concerning the publishing of these cartoons and their availability in other editions around the world proved to be unsuccessful. I have not received any reply from the offices of *Newsweek* concerning this matter. I use 'unintentionally', hoping against hope that *Newsweek* and many other U.S.A based communication media does not expect everyone should naturally be aware of everything related to America since the world is living the Age of America.

¹⁶ *Independent on Sunday*, 4 August 1996, p.12.

This cartoon effectively shows us the importance of common background information for sharing a humorous event in different cultures. Since the Olympics is considered as *the* event in most people's sport calendars in five continents. Such a live coverage on television naturally attracts huge numbers of viewers and in turn generates a huge interest. This means that our average overseas reader from Ukraine has already stored in his memory banks the necessary information on the meaning of the Olympics to help him in order to comprehend the humour in this particular cartoon.

If our reader had found the opportunity to watch some of the coverage, he would relate to the cartoon much more easily and enjoy more depending on his sense of humour. If he is not already familiar with that biased television coverage through out the competition and does not have the necessary background data in his memory banks, he could still use the help provided by the main article that those two cartoons have been used as supplementary material. As it is clear from the examples above, a sufficient amount of pre-installed data is crucial for the reader to respond and comprehend the humour.

The emphasis of this dissertation is to transfer the intended message in a cartoon without any loss for an another culture. Unlike situation comedies, cartoons with speech balloons do not have the advantage of 'conditioning' their audiences by introducing their characters in the long run and provide that much needed 'familiarisation' for the longevity of the series. They also cannot employ the technique called 'canned' laughter to trigger off their readers. Yet, unlike cartoons without captions, they can give all the necessary ingredients inside the speech balloons.

Like all types of representation, visual representation abstracts particular features of a circumstance. Plato describes *picture* as either an abstraction or an imitation of particulars.¹⁷ However, our problem begins when we do not already know the object or the person. A cartoon, taken as a picture, can still manage to communicate with its receiver and this is what makes the translation process easier since at least half of the translation is already there in front of our eyes. As with sitcoms or traditional stage comedies, the visual aspect of the show could be helpful to the audience to 'get' the joke more easily.

0.4. Visual Aspects of Humour

According to Bassnett 'jokes travel badly across frontiers' and instead of crossing borders and uniting people 'the comic is all about boundaries.'¹⁸ On the other hand, many contemporary popular USA sitcoms such as *The Cosby Show*, *Home Improvement*, *Roseanne* and more recently the enormously popular *Friends*; on British television; along with other titles such as *Cybil*, *Married with Children*, *Cheers* and its spin off *Fraiser* with their "fewer gags per show" formula¹⁹ seem to have an impact so far in Britain and various other countries.²⁰

In Turkey, BBC products such as *Yes Minister* and its equally funny follow up, *Yes Prime Minister*, were hugely successful among Turkish viewers during their first and repeated screenings in the early eighties. As for the 1990s,

¹⁷ Ibid.. p.227.

¹⁸ Bassnett, Susan.. 'Comedy and Translation', conference paper, British Comparative Association, Manchester. 1986.

¹⁹ According to Aaronovitch. British shows still keen to follow the formula in which 'the plots tended to revolve around failed practical jokes. embarrassing household mishaps. doomed get-rich-quick schemes. ceaseless unsuccessful attempts to get the better of one's next-door neighbour. misinterpreted phone calls... A secretary would mix up the dunning letters and the party invitations. or uproariously blow off her boss's toupee by turning up the air-conditioner full blast.' David Aaronovitch. 'Fewer Gags. But More Laughs', *Independent*, 21 September 1997. p.10.

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there are still occasional screenings of several vintage comedy shows from Britain such as *The Benny Hill Show* by some private channels but not during prime time.

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All these sitcoms and movies have basically two things in common: they are combined products of audio and visual material and that is the exact reason why they are so accessible to other cultures. The visual side of these works is definitely helping the audience to understand and relate to the story or events and it also act as interpreters in its own way. We could even claim that, by quoting Koestler, they are the 'translations of humour into visual imagery'.²²

"*Living in Coventry is like watching a plank warp.*"²³

0.5. The Comprehension of Humour.

In his second book of jokes²⁴, the late Isaac Asimov repeats what he did in his previous book on the same subject called *Isaac Asimov's Treasury of Humour* by analysing the jokes in order to inform his reader on how to tell that a particular joke or others with greater effectiveness. Asimov firmly believes that "even a bad joke can be salvaged if told properly even if you heard the joke before since there

²⁰ For detailed audience ratings for these import shows, including re-runs, especially *Roseanne*, *Friends*, *Fraiser*, *Cheers*, *The Coshy Show* and *Home Improvement*, see various issues of the weekly *Radio Times* television magazine covering the period from 1993 to the present.

²¹ Unfortunately, I have to base all the information on sitcoms shown on Turkish television on my personal observations since it has always been very difficult to obtain reliable information on television programming and viewing in Turkey because the state television, *TRT* (Turkish Radio and Television), was a state monopoly during that particular era and it simply did not care about the ratings since there was not any other alternative. Another interesting data concerning the acceptance and popularity of such sit-coms in other countries comes from the report announced by the BBC. According to this report, BBC earned £131m (£77m in gross value) in 1996 from its programme sales through its own BBC World-wide and among the 10 best-selling programmes there is a sit-com called *Fawlty Towers* which was bought by not less than 60 countries. (*Independent*, Thursday, 06 March 1997) Meanwhile, ever popular British comic Mr. Rowan Atkinson confirmed during an interview on *Virgin Radio* (11 August 1997) that *Mr.Bean*, his 'universally identified' comic television character, has been bought by more than 80 countries. All these details would indicate that the cultural boundaries between the nations are clearly not that high when it comes to visual or graphic humour.

²² Arthur Koestler. *The Act of Creation*, (London: Picador, 3rd printing 1978), p.70.

²³ Walter Nash. *The Language of Humour* (London and New York: Longman, 1985), p.13.

is always the small chance that the jokester will make a point or put a twist you have not heard before.” Asimov, then, tries to explain why a joke about an Irish Catholic Michael Moriarty, who converts to Judaism in order to play golf like those three Chasidim he had seen in the golf links, is so funny. Moriarty fails because of choosing the wrong synagogue for tennis players. Asimov explains that choosing stereotype Jew and Irishman would provide/create the necessary incongruities for laughs. But he points out that a joke-teller must be aware of the nature of the audience,

Even if gentile, they would laugh at the joke, but I would have to translate *Chasidim* into *Ultra-Orthodox Jews* and *shul* into *synagogue* or even temple. Something like this should be done quickly and without pause, for it would otherwise introduce a glitch that would damage the joke. Of course, if you’re telling the story to Jews or to New Yorkers—who, even if not Jewish, know something about Jewish ways—you can skip the translation. You can also have the Chasidim speak with a strong Yiddish accent. That is guaranteed to make the joke funnier.²⁵

If we change the Irishman into a Frenchman, or the Chasidim into three Lutheran ministers, Asimov warns, those some simple-looking changes would reduce the fun even the joke were otherwise still word for word. “More subtle” he continues “is the choice of tennis as the last word. What if you had said polo, or handball? The humour would have been more subdued. Polo is too highbrow for belief, while handball is too lowbrow for consideration. Only tennis matches golf at a level”.²⁶

Nash explains what is expected from us -the hearer- in order to understand jokes in their given context. The generic reference includes the social and historical facts which most of us can be assumed to know, the customary

²⁴ Isaac Asimov, *Asimov Laughs Again* (London: Harper Collins, 1992).

²⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

²⁶ Ibid., p.8.

patterns of behaviour, the dominant or traditional attitudes, prejudices and stereotypes, the conventional themes and theme-related designs of literature and art. So many things could be considered funny that a list would be impractical but most obvious themes for jokes would be politicians, foreigners, insanity-asylum jokes-, drunks and homosexuals.

As for the commonplaces of textual allusion, Nash gives us the example of an anonymous graffito master who offers " I drink, therefore I am; I'm drunk, therefore I was" which plays upon *cogito, ergo sum*, 'I think, therefore I am' and invites the reader/viewer to appreciate his work which, according to Nash, is a very difficult thing to do without recognising the derivation of his joke²⁷.

Nash wishes to study the language of humour by avoiding the linguistic analysis and concentrate on the aspect of *language* because

"Paradoxically, linguistics in the strictest sense may not comprehend the humorous activity of language (...) humour is an occurrence in a social play and it characterises the interaction of persons in situations in cultures, and our responses to it must be understood in that broad context".²⁸

Similarly, Roland Diot admits that he felt himself alienated when he encountered with a comic strip titled *In Search of Reagan's Brain* by an American humourist Gary Trudeau. After giving a detailed account of this particular comic strip, Diot concludes that although he had enjoyed the sight of the strip as an image of a distorted reality - a foreign reality- he felt no sympathy for it because

I remain 100% detached and ready to laugh malignantly and without any reluctant emotion...I keep apart and aloof; I am an outsider, unconcerned and alienated from the operation. Otherness is my problem: I may compare the American political carnival to the well known and familiar mess at home (France) but there it stops: to me it is satire, not humour.²⁹

²⁷ Ibid., p.11.

²⁸ Ibid., pp.11-12.

²⁹ Unfortunately, Diot cannot provide the strip and relies on his memory. Roland Diot, 'Humour for Intellectuals: Can it be exported and translated?' *Meta*, XXXIV, 1 (1989), pp.84-87.

Yet, as Hess and Northrop conclude at the end of their detailed analysis of American cartoons and cartoonists, cartoons are detailed records of their times and could reveal many details which would help to find a missing link

For better or worse, cartoonists capture the popular sentiment and culture of their times often more truthfully-certainly more colourfully-than a scholar's textbook. They vibrantly reflect their moment in time: the costumes and conversations, the prejudices and fears. While a cartoon's popularity may prove ephemeral, cartoons will survive as clues to our society's interests, beliefs, and values-both positive and negative (...) Cartoons reflect something that no other historical artifact can reveal.³⁰

In a similar way to these views proposed by Hess and Northrop, this dissertation sees it important to translate cartoons, especially non-political ones, in order to form a cultural link between distant nations and ultimately create a forum for exchanging ideas and life-styles.

³⁰Stephen Hess and Sandy Northrop, *Drawn and Quartered: The History of American Political Cartoons* (Montgomery, Alabama: Elliot & Clerk Publishing, 1996), pp.19-21

CHAPTER I

1.1 A Survey of Humour

During the research for this dissertation, it became clear that the literature on translatability or untranslatability of literary texts was abundant whereas the data on translation of humour was scarce and has mainly focused on the translation of jokes and literary texts. On the other hand, the literature on humour itself presented another problem. The field of humour was mainly dominated by psychologists and philosophers who were trying to find out why people from all walks of life, including imbeciles, paranoiacs and schizophrenics are laughing. The following section came into being as a result of my realisation that humour can be anything and one is capable of laughing at almost anything. The field of humour, as we will try to demonstrate, has no certain boundaries. The only limit to speak of humour is the limit an individual sets for himself. To make this somehow abstract idea of limitlessness 'sense' of humour, more concrete evidence is crucial before attempting to translate from *Leman* and other popular humour weekly magazines.

This study assumes that the essence and structure of humour is dependent on people's conceptions and as the author will try to demonstrate in due course, these conceptions may vary extensively and the translation process will also be effected accordingly. The expectations from translators and their translations have always been high in the field of translation studies. A linguistically faultless translation is not enough for the critics. It is just considered as the beginning of the whole process. A translator is usually expected to translate the essence of a text in addition to its meaning for an audience whom s/he usually does not know

much about. The translator can never completely be sure about his/her target readership yet should deliver a near perfect result at any cost.¹ Yet, one question still remains unanswered: how can one translate a 'state of mind' which is the essence of humour, from one distant and different culture, Turkish, into another culture, English, which approaches a matter as simple as a handshake differently from the source culture.² As anyone who had been to Turkey and spent some time would have witnessed, people talking endlessly while shaking hands vigorously in the middle of a pavement. This is still quite a normal sight during the *Kurban Bayramı* (Festival of the Sacrifices, though it is becoming increasingly rare in inner cities) to see two people violently shaking their locked hands upside down while they are bargaining on the price of a sheep.

The following section attempts to define something which has been long considered indefinable: humour.

It is obvious that this dissertation cannot pre-determine on a 'readership profile' to rely on before the translation activity and determine their sense of humour assuming everyone has got one. But, the translation has to be performed nevertheless. Since one of the most important objectives of translation practice is to maintain a cultural communication, the cartoon translation might be another

¹ A recent example for this type of cost is the translation of *Ulysses* into Turkish by Nevzat Erkmén. His preparations and the translation process that followed are legendary in the literary circles. As he later explained, Erkmén put an tremendous effort into his research and collected huge amount of background data concerning the background of the book and James Joyce before his translation. The way he conducted his work was demanding and he had to make some personal sacrifices such as locking himself away in his attic in order to meet his deadline. He also expressed his thoughts on this subject in his preface to the book.

² According to Storry and Childs. 'In Britain, across all classes, few people shake hands. Handshaking on meeting is today a more widespread practice in much of the rest of the world than it is in the UK. British people do shake hands, not routinely on meeting one another, but usually when they are introduced to a stranger, whether at home or at work.' *British Cultural Identities*, Mike Storry and Peter Childs (eds.). (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p.14.

path that leads to understanding and appreciating another culture and nation no matter how distant and different they are.³

To talk about humour and try to understand how exactly it operates, as it was mentioned before, is an extremely difficult task and probably more difficult to be scientific about. The element of humour could be found in anything and in any possible or impossible form and shape.

The whole issue might become extremely confusing when one deals with cartoons in which the illustrators starting point is usually 'what would happen if...' . As in the works of science fiction, fantasy and horror, there are no limits for the cartoonist and what s/he can do by employing graphics and words. This is what makes humour so complex and sometimes impenetrable for the outsider or in some cases for the insider as well. Sometimes humour needs some sort of 'sense' to be appreciated or recognised. Sometimes the intended message or punch line could be so open, clear and direct that it is impossible to miss. But it may feel bizarre and funny at the same time as in *American Psycho*, a very controversial work of fiction and an extreme example of satire, deviant psychology, murder and alienation in a big city.⁴ The following two jokes quoted from the book could well be classified under the headings of either a product of bad taste or downright toilet humour yet similar jokes are always in circulation.

³ For further rendering of this subject with examples, see 'Laughing Matters: you think that's funny?', *The Economist*, 345, 8048, (1997-1998), 25-27.

⁴ Bret Easton Ellis, *American Psycho* (London: Picador, 1991)

Bateman, the (anti)hero of the book, narrates both jokes in first person narration as he does throughout the book. A friend of Bateman in the company of a group of male American businessmen tells the first joke

“Oh wait guys, listen, I got a joke.” Preston rubs his hands together.

“Preston,” Price says, “you *are* a joke. You do know you *weren’t* invited to dinner. By the way, nice jacket; nonmatching but complementary.”

“Price, you are a bastard, you are so fucking *mean* to me it hurts,” Preston says, laughing. “Anyway, so JFK and Pearl Bailey meet at this party and they go back to the Oval Office to have sex and so they fuck and then JFK goes to sleep and...” Preston stops. “Oh gosh, now what happens... Oh yeah, so Pearl Bailey says Mr. President I wanna fuck you again and so he says I’m going to sleep now and in...thirty-no, wait...” Preston pauses again, confused. “Now...no, sixty minutes...no...okay, thirty minutes I’ll wake up and we’ll do it again but you’ve got to keep one hand on my cock and the other on my balls and she says okay but why do I have to keep one hand on your dick and one...one hand on your balls...and...” He notices that Van Patten is idly doodling something on the back of a napkin. “Hey Van Patten-are you listening to me?” “I’m listening,” Van Patten says, irritated. “Go ahead. Finish it. One hand on my cock, one hand on my balls, go on.”

“I’m not,” Price says.

“And he says because...” Again Preston falters. There’s a long silence. Preston looks at me.

“Don’t look at me,” I say. “It’s not my joke.”

“And he says...My mind’s a blank.”

“Is that the punch line-My mind’s a blank?” McDermott asks.

“He says, um, because...” Preston puts a hand over his eyes and think about it. “Oh gosh, I can’t believe I forgot this...”

“Oh great, Preston” Price sighs. “You’re one unfunny bastard.”

“My mind’s a blank?” Craig asks me. “I don’t get it.”

“Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah,” Preston says. “Listen, I remember. Because the last time I fucked a nigger she stole my wallet.” He starts chuckling immediately. And after a short moment of silence, the table cracks up too, except for me.

“That’s it, that’s the punch line,” Preston says proudly, relieved.

Van Patten gives him high five. Even Price laughs.

“Oh Christ,” I say. “That’s awful.”

“Why?” Preston says. “It’s funny. It’s humour.”⁵

⁵ Ibid., pp. 37-38.

In another meeting with his friends, Bateman goes into a discussion on the merits of female existence and asks his friends if they have ever heard what one particular gentleman named Ed Gain had said about the companion of women

"*Ed Gein?*" one of them asks. "Maitre d' at Canal Bar?"

"No," I say. "Serial Killer, Wisconsin in the fifties. He was an interesting guy."

"You've always been interested in stuff like that, Bateman," Reeves says, and then to Hamlin, "Bateman reads these biographies all the time: Ted Bundy and Son of Sam and Fatal Vision and Charlie Manson. All of them."

"So what did Ed say?" Hamlin asks, interested.

"He said," I begin, "When I see a pretty girl walking down the street I think two things. One part of me wants to take her out and talk to her and be real nice and sweet and treat her right." I stop, finish my J/B in one swallow.

"What does the other part of him think?" Hamlin asks tentatively.

"What her head would look like on a stick," I say.

Hamlin and Reeves look at each other and then back at me before I start laughing, and then the two of them uneasily join in.⁶

Even though both the characters and jokes mentioned above are taken from a fictitious work, the jokes themselves could have easily been lifted from real life. Both jokes, especially the second one, would not be everyone's taste if the hearer is not particularly interested in this kind of humour which could be classified as 'sick humour'.⁷ Vogel explains that there used to be a wave of this type of jokes in the United States during the seventies, which has often been called "sick jokes". She provides some typical examples to give us an idea of how these jokes could attack to some deeply rooted taboos in Western culture like incest or cannibalism

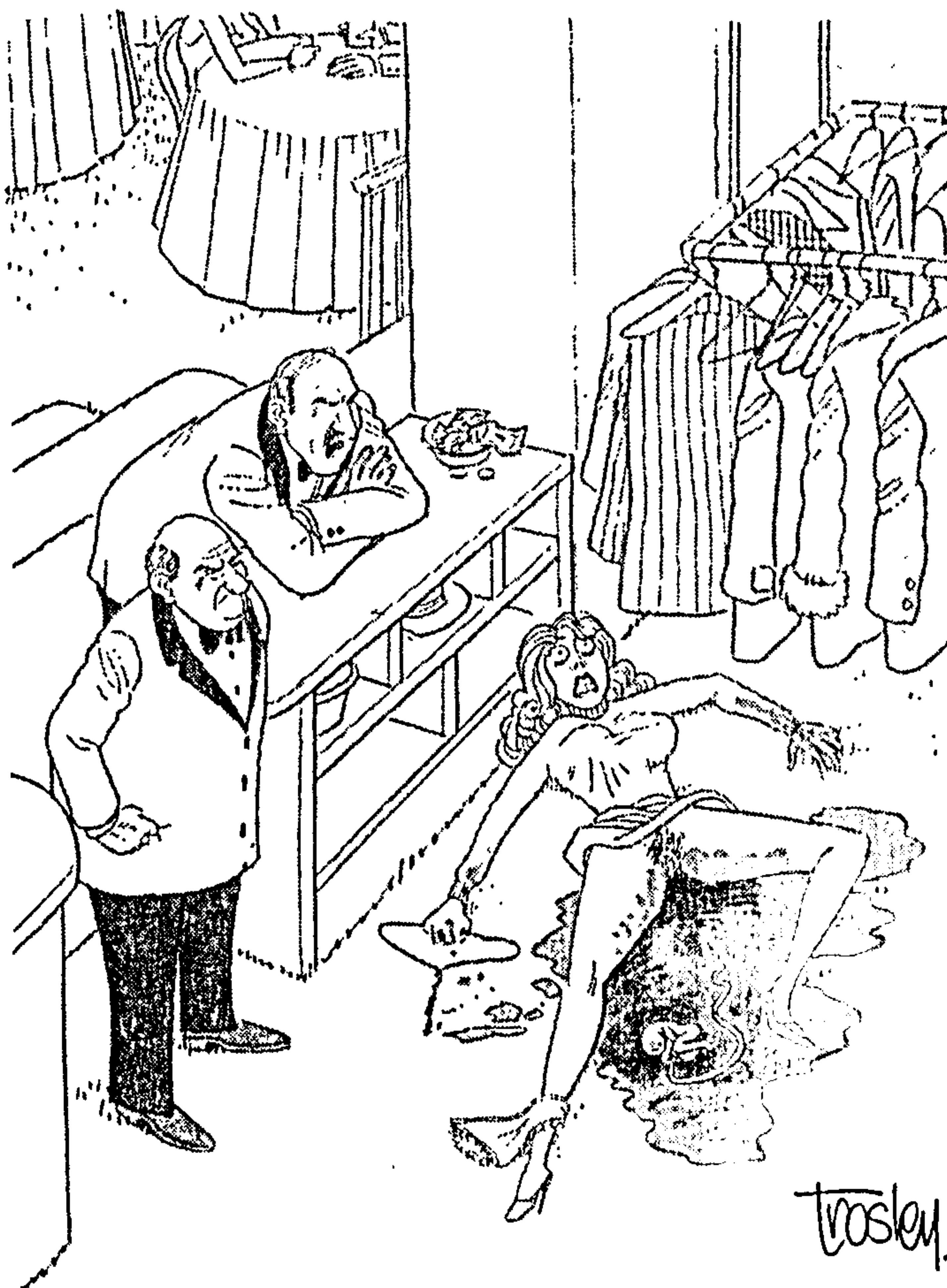
⁶ Ibid., p. 92.

⁷ Charney explains that 'in the typically sick joke, there is an outrageously cruel and insensitive statement, as in the slogan: "Hire the Handicapped; They're Fun to Watch," or the Helen Keller title: "Around the Block in Eighty Days." Sick humour provides its own special catharsis for the violation of taboos, and it offers an interesting test case of the distinction between comedy and tragedy. When we tell a sick joke, we are deliberately pushing the alienation of human sympathies, that comedy demands, to an absurd, outer limit. We can only laugh by choosing to ignore the obvious human content that would make the joke tragic.' Maurice Charney, *Comedy High and Low: an introduction to the experience of comedy*, (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), pp.176-7.

The fourteen-year old backwoods boy was making love to his twelve-year-old sister. "Man, Sis," he wheezes, "you're almost as good as Maw!" "Yeh," she gasps back, "that's what Paw says."

or

"Daddy, I don't like Grandpa."
"Shut up and eat your food."⁸



"That's some coat-check girl you hired...."

As Gruner asserts, 'sick humour has always been with us and will always be around, as long as humankind survives. It has two necessary ingredients: brevity mixed with light, simple language; and otherwise uncivilised and "inhumane" content, such as mutilation, mangling, death, monsterism etc. Since

⁸ Susan C. Vogel. *Humour: A Semigenetic Approach*, (Bochum: Studienverl. Brockmeyer, 1989). p.54.

the sick joke deals with such extreme and ultimately tasteless subject matter, it must also be immediately recognisable as a joke.'⁹

Apart from resembling a joke, many caricatures in *Leman*, especially those in the section titled *Lombok* share the two main characteristics mentioned above. This particular type of humour and the attitude, whose roots could be traced back to the first emergence of the underground press movement started around the late sixties in the United States of America, is just one of the many employed by *Leman* in its caricatures. From the standpoint of translation activity, the most important thing in a translation of cartoons with speech balloons is meaning since the drawing itself would complete the translation itself. Traditionally, the question of humour has been regarded as a search for the essence of humour.¹⁰ Another question that emerges from this search is yet another question: what is funny? As MacHovec explains

While people have been laughing worldwide and across every language and culture for centuries, no one has as yet definitively explained why people laugh. It is today as it was for Marcus Aurelius 2000 years ago: "Different things delight different people." Humour is a multi-coloured kaleidoscope of thoughts and feelings, times and places. What is funny is a complex psychological-emotional phenomenon involving a great variety of interacting variables.¹¹

The word humour has an ancient origin dating back to Latin and Greek, meaning a body fluid.¹² To provide a ultimate account and definition of humour

⁹ C.R.Gruner, *Understanding Laughter: The Workings of Wit and Humour*, (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1978) in Susan C. Vogel, *Humour: A Semiogenetic Approach*, (Bochum: Studienverl. Brockmeyer, 1989), p.54.

¹⁰ Michael Clark, 'Humour and Incongruity' in *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humour*, John Morreall (ed.), (New York: State Univ.of New York Press, 1987), p. 139.

¹¹ Frank J. MacHovec, *Humour: Theory, History, Applications*, (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1988), p.3.

¹² Ibid., p. 5. MacHovec further explains that in the ancient days the term humour did not mean 'being funny.' Its association with geniality came into use after Shakespeare during the late

would be a task almost next to impossible basically due to the sheer volume of data provided mainly by philosophers such as Aristotle, Hobbes, Hume, Kant, Schopenhauer, and Bergson and psychologists, most notably Freud and many members of the new-school of psychology.

There are many theories of laughter and, as Koestler states, the bibliography of Greig's *Psychology of Laughter and Comedy*, published in 1923, mentioned three hundred and sixty-three titles of works on the subject from Plato and Aristotle to Kant, Bergson, and Freud¹³. Vogel adds that Greig was able to list a total of 88 separate theories of humour and admitted that many of these theories had borrowed heavily from one another and that they differ from one another only in details.¹⁴ More recently, there were more than one thousand items- majority of them belonging to psychologists- concerning the different aspects of humour (and laughter) in the bibliography of the book published after the (First) *International Conference on Humour*.¹⁵

As Vogel states in her meticulously detailed work on humour, 'historical surveys of the numerous theories of humour give the impression that there are as many descriptions and definitions of the subject as there are theorists-and the reader is left with the impression that the essence of humour still remains maddeningly elusive and, despite the recent rise in the numbers of humour

1600s. The Greeks and Romans preferred the word *comedy* (Latin *comoedia*; Greek *komoidia*) a combination of the root word *komos*.

¹³ Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, 3rd edn, with a new preface by the author (London: Picador, 1978). p.32.

¹⁴ Susan C. Vogel, *Humour: A Semiogenetic Approach*, (Bochum: Studienverl. Brockmeyer, 1989), pp.5-7.

¹⁵ *It's a Funny Thing, Humour : International Conference on Humour*, ed.by Anthony J. Chapman and Hugh C. Foot (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1977)

theories in general, 'a truly global theory has yet to be proposed.'¹⁶ As Koestler indicates, "the difficulty lies evidently in the enormous range of laughter-producing situations-from physical tickling to mental titillation of the most varied kinds"¹⁷.

Raskin states that humour has defeated researchers in a harmful way by generating a great number of loose, incomplete, unrestricted or circular definitions of itself. For instance, Mindess defines humour as "a frame of mind, a manner of perceiving and experiencing life. It is a kind of outlook, a peculiar point of view, and one which has great therapeutic power".¹⁸ Pirandello asks

What is humour? If we should take into account all the answers that have been given to this question, all the definitions attempted by writers and critics, we could fill many pages and probably at that point, confused by so many differing opinions, we could do more than to repeat the question: But what, in short, is humour?¹⁹

Pirandello subsequently adds that almost everyone seems to be in agreement about one thing, that 'humour is truly very difficult to define because it has infinitive varieties and so many characteristics that any attempt at a general definition would risk forgetting some of them.'²⁰ It is also evident from the works on the subject that there is no terminological common ground among scholars and researchers as Raskin points out "one man's 'humour may be another man's 'laughter', and so on and so forth"²¹. Palmer also complain from this vagueness

¹⁶ Susan C. Vogel, *Humour: A Semiogenetic Approach*, (Bochum: Studienverl. Brockmeyer, 1989), p.1. Vogel also reports that H. Mindess, in *The Study of Humour* (Los Angeles: Antioch Uni., 1980) has even suggested that a theorist's choice of a particular type of humour is directly related to own personality and thus provides psychoanalysis with a revealing clue to his personal traits. p. 289.

¹⁷ Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, 3rd edn, with a new preface by the author (London: Picador, 1978), p.32.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.7.

¹⁹ Luigi Pirandello, *On Humour*, introduced, translated, and annotated by Antonio Illiano and Daniel P. Testa, (Chapel Hill: The Univ.of North Carolina Press, 1960), p.107.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.107.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.8. Similarly, MacHovec states that a study of current word usage of humour is likely to prove futile since "there is a wide range of words used today to refer to verbal, written or

The problem of what word to use when referring to particular funny events in the world is well known. What is the difference between 'joke' and 'jest', between 'funny' and 'comic', between 'mirth' and 'jocular', between 'wit' and 'satire'? Out of curiosity I started making a list of words which are all labels for funniness, and came up with the following in short order: laughter, mirth, joke, jest, witticism, wit, comedy, satire, parody, farce, clowning, buffoonery, jollity... At this point I realised that I was in for a long trek and turned to Roget's Thesaurus: 'funny' in the index refers the reader to 'witty 839 adj' and 'funny 849 adj'. Paragraph 839 contains some 250 words or expressions that in one way or another refer to the phenomenon of funniness, and refers the reader to roughly another twenty paragraphs in the Thesaurus; at this point I gave up on this approach, since the point was already obvious: too many words, most of them overlapping with one another at some point. And this is only within English²².

Freud also offers some insight ("few remarks" as he puts it) to the problem of humour in his widely quoted book on the subject

It is not easy to say what happens in a person when humourous pleasure is generated; but we can obtain some insight if we examine the cases in which humour is communicated or sympathised with, cases in which, by an understanding of the humourous person, we arrive at the same pleasure as his.²³

What is important in Freud's thinking is the way he regards humour. He provides us with the example of *Simplicissimus*, a famous Munich comic weekly, which had published 'a collection of incredible pieces of *brutality* and *cynicism* as the expression of men of feeling'.²⁴ According to Freud, the results they achieved, at the cost of horror and disgust, were simply astonishing. As will be seen later, this same attitude of *Simplicissimus*, as described by Freud, has its reflection in *Leman*, especially in the works of Solmaz, Baruter and to a certain extent Dabak.

observed humour which further frustrates the search for a simple explanation of what's funny. A sampling of words which relate to humour are: jest, joke or joking around, quip, parody, pun, mockery, ridicule, satire, sardonic, wise-crack, wit, witticism, fool, fool around or fooling, tomfoolery, horseplay, skylarking, clown or clowning (around), comic, comedic, caricature, cartoon and in the south "funnin'." These 26 terms are by no means a complete listing of humour-related words. They describe what's funny-but do not actually define it. Frank J. MacHovec, *Humour: Theory, History, Applications*, (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1988), p.6.

²² Jerry Palmer. *Taking Humour Seriously* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p.6.

²³ Ibid., p.294.

Humour, concludes Freud, can be regarded as one of the defensive processes of an individual

It scorns to withdraw the content bearing the distressing affect from conscious attention as repression does, and thus surmounts the automatism of defence. It brings this about by finding a means of withdrawing the energy from the release of un-pleasure that is already in preparation and of transforming it, by discharge, into pleasure.²⁵

This sense of defence mechanism is also true for cartoonists and it is possible to adopt Charney's depiction of comedians to the cartoonist in *Leman* without changing a word

But comedians never seem to find reality warm, comforting, and supportive. Something is always going wrong, mistakes and accidents and unaccountable mishaps are at the heart of the typical intrigue plot in comedy, and the comic hero is usually trying to grapple with a highly resistant reality. He is always on his guard, always on the *qui vive*, always alert to disaster and instant chaos. Wit is a weapon with which to protect yourself, perhaps the only weapon. The sad clown is neither powerful, rich, well born, handsome, well connected, or in any way favoured by the gods. He must make his way alone, against overwhelming odds, with ridiculously inadequate equipment.²⁶

Among the theories of laughter that have been proposed since the days of Aristotle we see that

the 'theory of degradation' appears as the most persistent. For Aristotle himself laughter was closely related to ugliness and debasement; for Cicero 'the province of the ridiculous...lies in a certain baseness and deformity'; for Descartes laughter is a manifestation of joy 'mixed with surprise or hate or sometimes with both'; in Francis Bacon's list of laughable objects, the first place is taken by 'deformity'.²⁷

As Clark further explains,

no one could hope to compile any short list of essential properties abstracted from all the many varieties of humour: human misfortune and

²⁴ Ibid., p.113. (emphasis added)

²⁵ Ibid., 299.

²⁶ Maurice Charney, *Comedy High and Low: an introduction to the experience of comedy*, (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), p. 167.

²⁷ Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, 3rd edn, with a new preface by the author (London: Picador, 1978), p.53.

clumsiness, obscenity, grotesqueness, veiled insult, nonsense, word play and puns, human misdemeanours, and so on, as manifested in forms as varied as parody, satire, drama, clowning, music, farce, and cartoons.²⁸

One of the most quoted theories of humour and laughter belongs to the French philosopher Henri Bergson. In his seminal essay, 'Laughter', he analysed the sociality of humour and claimed that we laugh at people in situations where they revert to a more automatic type of behaviour.²⁹ Miller indicates that we laugh at the man who falls on the banana skin and admits that he really cannot understand why this has become a representative figure in theories of humour.³⁰ Koestler also puts emphasis on this favourite example of Bergson and argues that

A fat man slipping and crashing on the icy pavement will be either a comic or a tragic figure according to whether the spectator's attitude is dominated by malice or pity: a callous schoolboy will laugh at the spectacle, a sentimental old lady may be inclined to weep. But in between these two there is the emotionally balanced attitude of the physician who happens to pass the scene of the mishap, who may feel both amusement and compassion, but whose primary concern is to find out the nature of the injury³¹.

Charney also approaches this same example and tries to bring it under a different light

If we see someone trip on a banana peel we laugh, especially if it is a well-dressed and self-important person. Only when he has broken his arm (or is

²⁸ Michael Clark. 'Humour and Incongruity' in *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humour*, John Morreall (ed.), (New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 1987), p. 139.

²⁹ According to Charney, this essay along with *Freud's Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), a book which tries to make nebulous distinctions between different kinds of comedy and makes the essential and unforgettable link between laughter and the irrational, the unconscious, and the instinctive drives of man, on the subject. Maurice Charney, *Comedy High and Low: an introduction to the experience of comedy*, (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), p.152.

³⁰ Jonathan Miller. 'Jokes and joking: a serious laughing matter', in *Laughing Matters: a serious look at humour*, ed. by John Durant and Jonathan Miller (London: Longman Scientific & Technical, 1988), p.10.

³¹ Arthur Koestler. *The Act of Creation*, 3rd edn, with a new preface by the author (London: Picador, 1978), p.46.

otherwise seriously injured), we stop laughing. In the dynamics of sick humour, however, we laugh when we see the person slip, but laugh even harder when we learn that he has broken his arm. We refuse our sympathy and insist on the full measure of retribution for persons who deserve (and need) our corrective laughter. But even sick humour would draw the line at persons whom we know and love. It is impossible to laugh at the injury of those near and dear to us, except in a condition of uncontrolled hysteria. It is this line of feeling that completely separates tragedy and comedy.³²

Morreall warns us that not all laughter is caused by amusement and not all amusement produces laughter; the amusement may be too mild or because of the situation we may suppress laughter.³³ On the other hand, Baudelaire claims that laughter “is one of the most frequent symptoms of madness and at the same time, to some extent, a symptom of weakness” and further asserts that “laughter is also satanic, and, therefore, profoundly human. It is born of Man’s conception of his own superiority. Since it is essentially human, it is also essentially contradictory, that is to say it is at once a sign of infinite grandeur and of infinite wretchedness”³⁴. Similarly, Kundera points out that in origin “laughter is of the devil’s domain. It has something malicious about it (things suddenly turning out different from what they pretended to be), but to some extent also a beneficent relief (things are less weighty than they appeared to be, letting us live more freely, no longer oppressing us with their austere seriousness)”.³⁵ Koestler, on the other hand, places a great emphasis on the subject of humour by devoting more than one

³² Maurice Charney, *Comedy High and Low: an introduction to the experience of comedy*, (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), p.176.

³³ *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humour*, John Morreall (ed.), (New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 1987), pp.4-5.

³⁴ Charles Baudelaire, *The Essence of Laughter and other essays, journals, and letters*, ed. by Peter Quennell. (Meridian Books, 1956), pp. 115-117.

³⁵ Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, the definitive new translation from the French by Aaron Asher, (HarperPerennial, 1996), p.86.

hundred pages in one of his major books to it³⁶. Koestler finds humour as an effective tool for *seeing* the way the nervous system operates

The effects on the nervous system of reading a Shakespeare sonnet, working on a mathematical problem, or listening to Mozart are diffuse and indefinable. There is no clear-cut predictable response to tell me whether a picture in the art gallery strikes another visitor as "beautiful" but there is a predictable facial contraction which tells me whether a caricature strikes him as 'comic'. *Humour is the only domain of creative activity where a stimulus on a high level of complexity produces a massive and sharply defined response on the level of physiological reflexes.*³⁷

It is clear from all these statements above that laughter is a complex, contradictory and inconsistent phenomenon. It might show the observer whether a particular product of humour is funny/amusing, but on the other hand, it might not. It is obvious that there are no definitive definitions or truths in this area.

1.2 Theories of Humour

Yet, it would be illuminating to have an overview on the principal theories of humour in order to gain a better appreciation of humour that operates in the cartoons with speech balloons in various humour magazines in Turkey and their translations into English. According to Monro, all the major theories of humour proposed by traditional names may be gathered under four main headings

1.2.1 The Incongruity Theory

This theory is usually considered as the most popular explanation of humour³⁸. According to this theory, amusement occurs as a result of certain kinds of inappropriateness, disharmony, and impropriety. In other words, 'the formal

³⁶ Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, 3rd edn, with a new preface by the author (London: Picador, 1978).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

object of amusement is "the incongruous."³⁹ According to Feinberg humour is not always the transformation of a strained expectation into nothing which, in turn, leads us to see the obvious weakness of this theory: it fails to account for numerous instances of disharmony which do not cause laughter. It is only certain kinds of incongruity, claims Feinberg, that results in humour; other kinds end up causing fear, shock, or disgust.⁴⁰ Soren Kierkegaard analyses humour in terms of the comical and holds that the primary element in the comical is contradiction. His general approach to humour; that the comical is present in every stage of life and wherever there is life, there is contradiction, and wherever there is contradiction, the comical is present; a view which corresponds with *Leman's* attitude and its presentation of humour.⁴¹

1.2.2 Release from Restraint

This theory takes a more physiological approach to laughter, 'treating it as the venting of excess nervous energy.'⁴² The theories in this group acknowledge two kinds of tension, physical and psychological. For instance, Herbert Spencer sees laughter as the only possible provider of physical release of emotion that has been created upon hearing a humorous anecdote or witnessing an amusing situation. Spencer sees humour a matter of 'surplus energy', along similar lines to those traditional writers and psychologists like L.W. Kline, A. Penjon, John

³⁸ *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humour*. John Morreall (ed.), (New York: State Univ. of New York Press. 1987), p.6.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.2-3.

⁴¹ Soren Kierkegaard, 'Concluding Unscientific Postscript', trans.by David F. Swenson. (Princeton: Princeton Univ.Press, 1941), pp.459-468.

⁴² *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humour*, John Morreall (ed.), (New York: State Univ. of New York Press. 1987), p.6.

Dewey and Sigmund Freud who tried to treat humour as a release from anxiety, hostility, or sexual pressure, a matter of 'discharge of psychic energy'.⁴³

1.2.3 Ambivalence

This approach defends the idea that we laugh 'hearing an anecdote or seeing an incident, we find opposite emotions struggling within us. It proposes that all humour is based on conflict between love and fear and, among adults, the ambivalence of humour comes from the conflict between sexual desire and repression of that desire.'⁴⁴ Milner made an analogy between humour and a safety device

Humour based laughter is a kind of safety device that warns man automatically...when he stretches beyond the safety limit in the direction of either Culture or Nature, and therefore in danger of losing his human equilibrium; something about himself, or others, will strike him as being ludicrous.⁴⁵

The problem with the Ambivalence theory explains Feinberg, lies in the fact that, ambivalence may result in anxiety, depression, or agony and there is no agreement on which these conflicting emotions would cause a humorous reaction.

1.2.4 Superiority

Basically, this theory proposes that we laugh at situations where we see ourselves as superior to some victim. We laugh from feelings of superiority over other people, or over our own former position.⁴⁶ As Thomas Hobbes explains, human beings are in a constant struggle with one another for power. In this

⁴³ Ibid.. pp. 3-4.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p.4.

⁴⁵ George Milner. 'Homo Ridens'. in *Semiotica*, vol. 1, 1972, p.27 in Leonard Feinberg, *The Secret of Humour*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1978), p.5.

struggle the failure of our competitors is equivalent to our success and that is exactly what makes us constantly watch others in search for signs that would show our superiority over them.⁴⁷

Men laugh at mischances and indecencies, wherein there lies not wit or jest at all...Also men laugh at the infirmities of others...I may therefore conclude that the passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with ours formerly.⁴⁸

After seeing the complexity of this phenomenon called humour and its various reflections, we now could proceed to the problem of translation such material and possible strategies. As we will see, in a similar vein, it could be a difficult task to understand the translation process itself.

⁴⁶ *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humour*, John Morreall (ed.), (New York: State Univ.of New York Press, 1987), p.5.

⁴⁷ *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humour*, John Morreall (ed.), (New York: State Univ.of New York Press, 1987), p.19.

⁴⁸ Leonard Feinberg. *The Secret of Humour*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1978), p.6.

1.3 Translation, Equivalence And Humour

'...suppose it (*tertium comparationis*- something) 'guarantees' that every word used in a translation is 'equivalent' to every word used in the original. There is no way it can 'guarantee' that the translation will have an effect on readers belonging to the target culture which is in any way comparable to the effect the original may have had on readers belonging to the source culture.'⁴⁹

No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.⁵⁰

I only wonder what kind of appraisal would we find in Italian literary histories of a book like *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* if it had been written in Italian by an Italian; I wonder what masterpieces of humour such as, let's say, *Circe* and *I capricci del bottaio* (and perhaps even Gian Carlo Passeroni's *Vita di Cicerone*) would be if they had been written in English by an English writer.⁵¹

1.3.1 Introduction

Bassnett and Lefevere state that 'translation has been a major shaping force in the development of world culture' and 'there is always a context in which the translation takes place, always a history from which a text emerges and into which a text is transposed.'⁵² Translation of humour is no exception to their observation and it also presents a clash between two cultures during and after the translation process. Sometimes this clash does extent to the members of any given culture when it comes to appreciate humour. As it was shown above, humour is an ambiguous enough concept and most of the time it is just a matter of taste of a particular individual. As Bassnett and Lefevere have mentioned in the first

⁴⁹ Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevere (eds.), *Translation, History and Culture*, (London: Pinter, 1990), p.12.

⁵⁰ B. L. Whorf, 'Language, Thought and Reality' in Delia Chiaro, *The Language of Jokes: Analysing Verbal Play*, (London: Routledge, 1992), p.77

⁵¹ Luigi Pirandello, *On Humour*, introduced, translated and annotated by Antonio Illiano and Daniel P. Testa, (Chapel Hill: The Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1960), p.94.

⁵² Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevere (eds.), *Translation, History and Culture*, (London: Pinter, 1990), p.11.

quotation, there is no guarantee for a perfect result in communication via translation and, as it was explained within the relevance theory

1.3.2 Defining the Core: The Translation

Should we expect a 'proper' *translation* result from a 'humour' related material which is itself not considered 'proper' or 'serious' subject at all? To answer this question may require an answer to another question. Should we have the right to expect a 'proper' *translation* at the end in its literal meaning? And maybe the most important question of all: what kind of translation should we employ during the proceedings? It is not easy to reach an agreement on this problem yet it would be important to find one in order to define the strategy to translate humour. Another important idea, that the translator attempts to reproduce the totality of the original source-language text in the translated language, has deeply shaped the theory and practice of translation from the 19th century into the 20th century.⁵³ During the early Christian period translation regarded as a tool of the target language, Latin, that dictated the rules for translation which "reproduces the peculiar features of a foreign language with those features of one's own language" and to the translator who should consider thought content as a prisoner which he transplants into his own language with the prerogative of a conqueror. Friedrich explains that, the Romans came up with another concept of translation practice that could be considered as an extension of the approach mentioned before. They saw translation as a contest with the original text, in which the goal was to surpass the original end, during the process, "to consider the original as a

⁵³ Schulte and Biguenet cite Nabokov being probably the only major exception to that practice, who maintains that only a literal translation, a word-for-word translation is a valid one. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (eds.), *Theories of Translation: an anthology of essays from Dryden to Derrida*, (Chicago and London: The Univ.of Chicago Press, 1992), p.6.

source of inspiration for the creation of new expressions in one's own language- yet, never to the degree of exaggerated deviation from common usage that might occur in the original text".⁵⁴

It would be important to quote Newmark at this point in relation to possible strategies during the translation of humour. Newmark, during his attempt to explain the transference of functionally relevant meaning, states that

Here I should state that every variety of meanings can be transferred, and therefore, unequivocally that everything can be translated. *This does not mean that every relevant aspect of meaning in a text is translated*, because this would sometimes be longwinded and cumbersome (a translation should usually as concise as possible, like good writing) *and would require a long explanation. The explanation is then the translation, which is not usually good translation, but the best that can be achieved in the circumstances.*⁵⁵

Ezra Pound, on the other hand, believing that there cannot be a *'fixed' meaning of a work of art since it changes as language changes*, assumes the translator a duty of understanding the text that includes *the time, place, and ideological restrictions* being translated.⁵⁶ We should also mention Frederic Will since he could provide us with some clues for the translation of humour. Will explains that language is indeterminate and we never have access to the meaning behind specific language and a translator *translates not what a work means, but the energy or "thrust" of a work, for which there is no "correct" way of translating.*⁵⁷

Toury's approach to the problem of "proper" or "acceptable" translation is based on difference and assumes that there are structural differences between

⁵⁴ Ibid.p.13.

⁵⁵ Peter Newmark, *About Translation*, (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 1993), p.28. (My Emphasis)

⁵⁶ Edwin Gentzler. *Contemporary Translation Theories*. (London: Routledge, 1993), p.23 (My Emphasis)

languages. Toury places total acceptability in the target culture at the one extreme and total adequacy to the source text at the other and locates translation in the middle.

*No translation is ever entirely "acceptable" to the target culture because it will always introduce new information and forms defamiliarizing to that system, nor is any translation entirely "adequate" to the original version, because the cultural norms cause shifts from the source text structures.*⁵⁸

1.3.3 Translation and Culture

It is one of the main theoretical arguments in the field of translation that the translation is doomed to failure and is an impossible task. For Baker, there seems to be two main reasons for this

Languages are never sufficiently similar to express the same realities, and even worse, 'reality' cannot be assumed to exist independently of language.⁵⁹

As Baker affirms, 'translation often involves a tension- a difficult choice between what is typical and what is accurate' and even though accuracy is a very important aim in translation 'it is equally important to bear in mind that the use of common target-language patterns which are familiar to the target reader, plays an important role in keeping the communication channels open' and this kind of approach would definitely help 'to distinguish between a smooth translation, and a clumsy translation which sounds "foreign".⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.34.

⁵⁸ Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, (London: Routledge, 1993), p.128. (My emphasis)

⁵⁹ Mona Baker, *In Other Words: a course book on Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992)

1.3.4 Translation and Representing the Cultures

As Newmark states in his introduction to *A Textbook of Translation*,

Foreign communities have their own language structures and their own cultures, 'foreign' individuals have their own way of thinking and therefore of expressing themselves' and although the act of translation is always likely, "it may for various reasons not have the same impact as the original."⁶¹

Similarly, Gideon Toury, in his *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, observes that

There is no way a translation could share the same systematic space with its original; not even when the two are physically present side by side. This is not to say that, having been severed from it, a translation would never be in a position to bear on the source culture again, on occasion even on the source text itself.⁶²

Jakobson sounds more cynical than Newmark and Toury. After distinguishing the translation activity mainly into three types as Intralingual (rewording) Interlingual (*translation proper*) and Intersemiotic (*transmutation*) he asserts that "there is ordinarily no full equivalence through translation" in any of his categories and all poetic art is therefore technically untranslatable and the translation is only an *adequate interpretation* of an alien code unit and equivalence is impossible."⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.57

⁶¹ Peter Newmark, *A TextBook of Translation*, (New York and London: Prentice Hall, 1988), p.6.

⁶² Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, (Philadelphia: John Benjamin Publishings Co., 1995), p.26.

⁶³ Roman Jakobson, 'On Linguistic Aspects of Translation', in R. A. Browes (ed.), *On Translation*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1959) in Susan Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, (London and New York: Routledge, (1980), Rev.ed 1992), pp.14-15, italics as in original.

Similar to this approach, as Coletti describes, following two unsuccessful attempts in 1973 Umberto Eco finally had given up the idea of translation of his book *Theory of Semiotics* into English and decided to write it directly in English.⁶⁴

The translator's task becomes harder when it comes to translating some cartoons with speech balloons from a country that is as culturally diverse as Turkey. Yet, naturally, the act of translation must take place even it is just for establishing a link of communication between remote cultures, which is one of the principle aims of translation. As Newmark observes

The work may describe a culture remote from the second reader's experience, which the translator wants to introduce him not as the original reader, who took or takes it for granted, but as something strange with its own special interest. *But if the culture is as important as the message (the translator has to decide), he reproduces the form and content of the original as literally as possible (with some transliterations), without regard for equivalent-effect.*⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Theresa Coletti. *Naming the Rose: Eco, Medieval Signs, And Modern Theory*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1988), p.10. Eco further explains that "to re-write in another language means to *re-think*: and the result of this truly semiotic experience... is that this book no longer has anything to do with *La struttura assente*-so that I have now retranslated it into Italian as a brand-new work".

⁶⁵ Peter Newmark. *Approaches to Translation*, (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982), p.11. (my emphasis) An interesting example for this type of 'secret code' is some particular movie theatres in almost every city that holds more than one theatre. Since there are no definite regulations for the cinemas showing erotic or pornographic material in varying degrees, the theatres invented a code (in place of familiar XXX signs in the West) for their audiences. Every enthusiastic moviegoer knows and understands when he sees those four words outside the theatre: *Üç Film Birden Devamlı*- literally means *Three Movies Non-stop*. There are usually no pictures or movie posters in and around the theatre for viewing yet people understand that that particular theatre is screening at least two heavily edited films with pornographic material. The audience would never complain if they do not see all three movies, and they are also aware of the fact that - this is something that they acquire by experience- since there is no particular story line to follow in those films, they could go into the theatre any time they like and catch a piece of action because the movies in question are really continuous and usually there are no intervals. Naturally, this type of presentation would be a totally alien practice for an average visitor from the west and he would never discover the truth without buying a ticket.

1.3.5 The Problem of Equivalence in Translation

The mere demand that a translation be equivalent to a certain original is void of content.

W. Koller⁶⁶

At this point, the principle of equivalence requires some further rendering since it is one of the most important aspects of a translation process to be taken into consideration during the translation of humour material.

Equivalence, as Bassnett indicates, 'a much-used and abused term in Translation Studies'⁶⁷, is one of the most problematic areas in translation theory. As Hervey and Higgins state, 'the literature on translation studies has generated a lot of discussion of what is known as the principle of equivalent effect. In a nutshell, this principle stipulates that the target text should produce 'the same' effects on its audience as those produced by the source text on its original readers'.⁶⁸ Gutt observes that "most accepted concept of equivalence is probably that of 'function' a translated text (or element of a text) is equivalent to its source language counterpart if it fulfils the same function" (Levy 1969, House 1981, de Waard and Nida 1986).⁶⁹ But, as Gutt emphasises, this notion of equivalence has already been rejected as inadequate the variety of the factors that should be taken into account during the comparison of original and the translation " any of which can be significant for same detail in the text, and hence needs to be taken into

⁶⁶ W. Koller. *Einführung in die Übersetzungswissenschaft*, (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1983) in Ernst-August Gutt, *Translation & Relevance: Cognition and Context*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p.10.

⁶⁷ Susan Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, (London and New York: Routledge, (1980), rev.ed 1992), p. 25.

⁶⁸ Sandor Hervey and Ian Higgins, *A Course in Translation Method: French to English*, (London & New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 22.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.10.

consideration when establishing the equivalence.⁷⁰ Bassnett also suggest that "equivalence should not be approached as a search for sameness, since sameness cannot even exist between two target language (TL) versions of the same text, let alone between the source language (SL) and the TL version".⁷¹

To make this concept more accessible, Popovic separates it into four types:

1. *Equivalence*: in this type of equivalence, there is homogeneity on the linguistic level of both SL *Linguistic* and TL texts.
2. *Paradigmatic equivalence*: there is equivalence of 'the elements of a paradigmatic axis'.
3. *Stylistic (translational) equivalence*: there is 'functional equivalence of elements in both original and translation aiming at an expressive identity with an invariant of identical meaning
4. *Textual (syntagmatic) equivalence*: there is equivalence of the syntagmatic structuring of a text.⁷²

Albrecht Neubert considers the equivalence theory as the "missing link" between the components of a complete translation theory and approaches the question of translation equivalence by proposing that it must be considered a *semiotic category*, comprising a *syntactic*, *semantic* and *pragmatic* component.⁷³

According to J.C. Catford, translation equivalence and the term 'equivalent' is clearly a key term and 'the central problem of the translation practice is that of finding TL translation equivalents 'could take place

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.11.

⁷¹ Susan Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, (London and New York: Routledge, (1980), rev.ed 1992), p.29.

⁷² Ibid.,25.

When SL and TL items are relatable to 'the same' features of substance. The SL and TL items rarely have 'the same meaning' in the linguistic sense; but they can function in the same situation. In total translation, SL and TL texts or items are translation equivalents when they are *interchangeable in a given situation*. This is why translation equivalence can nearly always be established at sentence-rank-the sentence is the grammatical unit most directly related to speech-function within a situation.⁷⁴

On the other hand, Eugene Nida identifies two types of equivalence: *formal equivalence* which focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content which in translation practice- Nida calls it 'gloss translation' which allows the reader to understand as much of the SL context as possible- correspondences as poetry to poetry, sentence to sentence, and concept to concept.⁷⁵ Nida's other distinction is called *dynamic equivalence*, which is based on the principle of equivalent effect, i.e. that the relationship between receiver and message should aim at being the same as that between the original receivers and the SL message.⁷⁶ Newmark sees 'equivalent effect' - also called the "equivalent response" or as Nida calls it "dynamic equivalence"- as the desirable *result*, rather than the *aim* of any translation.

Bearing in mind that it is an unlikely result in two cases: (a) if the purpose of the SL text is to affect the TL translation is to inform (or vice versa); (b) if there is a pronounced cultural gap between the SL and the TL text.⁷⁷

⁷³ Ibid. p.27. italics as in original.

⁷⁴ J.C. Catford. *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An essay in applied linguistics*, London: Oxford Univ. Press. 1965., pp.49-52, italics as in original.

⁷⁵ Susan Bassnett. *Translation Studies*, (London and New York: Routledge, (1980), rev.ed 1992). p.26.

1.3.6 Humour: Can it be shared and translated?

No one expects the Italians or the French to possess English humour; as no one can expect the English to laugh like the Italians or to use the French *esprit*. They may have even done so occasionally, this doesn't prove anything.⁷⁸

Friedrich Schleiermacher provides one of the earliest commentaries on humour translation by pointing out that translation is required even among those who were the members of the same society sharing the same language and not separated by different dialects but coming from different social classes that have very little contact and who are far apart in their education can often communicate with each other only through a similar process of translation.⁷⁹ He states that

This genre (comedy) is, as far as language is concerned, closest to the field of social conversation. The entire representation lives in the morals of the time and of the people, which in turn are vividly and perfectly reflected in the language. For any approximation of a foreign language does damage to those virtues of presentation. Now if the translation wants to let the author of a play speak as if he had originally written in the language of the translation, then there are many things it cannot make him say, because they are not native to its people and therefore have no symbol in their language. In this case, *the translator must either cut some parts out completely and thereby destroy the form and the power of the whole, or he must put something else in their place.*⁸⁰

Bassnett similarly assesses that the audience of famous cartoon characters Tom and Jerry can share a laugh mainly because their willingness to operate within the conventions of the comic form and concludes that "contrary to popular mythology that the comic crosses frontiers and unites people, the comic is all

⁷⁶ Ibid., 26.

⁷⁷ Peter Newmark *Approaches to Translation*, (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982), p.48.

⁷⁸ Luigi Pirandello. *On Humour*, introduced, translated and annotated by Antonio Illiano and Daniel P. Testa. (Chapel Hill: The Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1960), p.103.

⁷⁹ This approach is particularly interesting since, as we have seen in the related chapter, *Girgir* -quite possibly intentionally- performed a similar duty among the illiterate section of the population in Turkey during the seventies.

⁸⁰ Friedrich Schleiermacher. "On the Different Methods of Translating" in *Theories of Translation: an anthology of essays from Dryden to Derrida*, Rainer Schulte and John

about the boundaries".⁸¹ But she is not altogether pessimistic about the translatability of comic material within the boundaries of linguistic utterance. She explains thus

The pun, word play, riddles or jokes based on language games. Here the function of the utterance is precise: the defamiliarization of words in a shared compact between speaker and hearers, writer and reader. In short a game. At first sight, this form of comic might seem to present the most complex translation difficulties and indeed, in terms of purely 'linguistic' translation, if one wants to accept that terminology, the vast majority of this type of text is untranslatable. Yet because the function of the text is so clear, translators are able to seize on that as a method of working, assuming a functional equivalence which makes translation possible.⁸²

It is generally agreed upon that the main task of a proper translation should be to bridge the cultural gap between monolingual speakers of different cultures. However, the backgrounds, shared knowledge, different cultural assumptions of these monolingual speakers are inevitably culture bound. It would be, then, reasonable to assume that it is nearly impossible to reproduce a replica of the responses rising from the source language speakers. As Hervey and Higgins warn us, even a small cultural distance between the two audiences would result in a *fundamental* dissimilarity. This dissimilarity would be between the effects of the source text and the target text and even though they can be similar, they can never be 'the same'. Hervey and Higgins then develop their argument further

A translator who decides that the effect of a given source text (ST) is to make its audience laugh can replicate the effect by producing a target text (TT) that makes its audience laugh. However, claiming 'sameness' of effect here would only be at the expense of a gross reduction of the effects of a text to a single effect. In fact, of course, few texts can be attributed

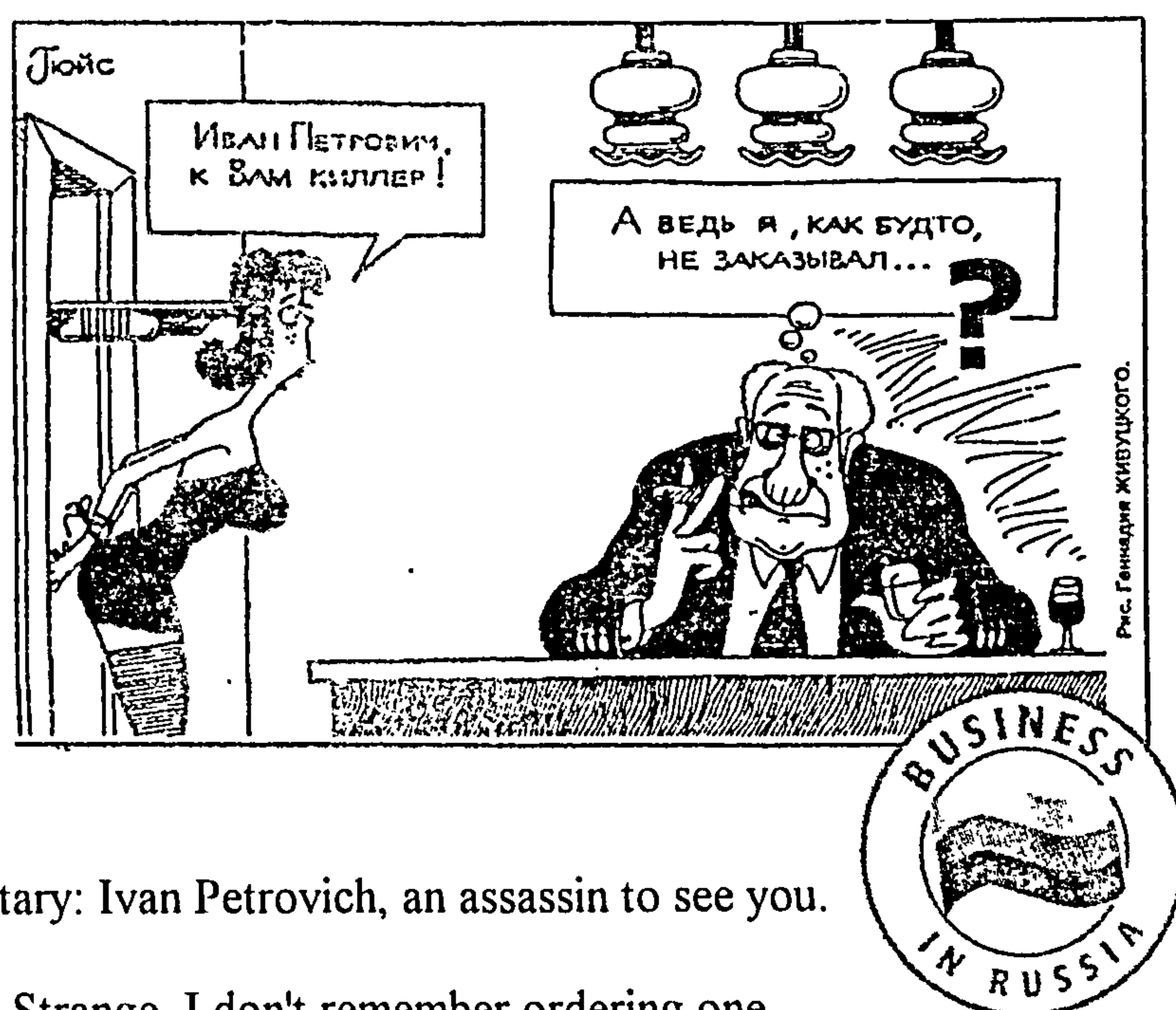
Biguenet (eds.), (Chicago and London: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 51-52. (My emphasis)

⁸¹ Bassnett, Susan. 'Comedy and Translation'. conference paper, British Comparative Association, Manchester, 1986.

⁸² Ibid., p.4.

such a monolithic singleness of purpose, and as soon as a ST has multiple effects, it is unlikely that the TT will be replicate them all.⁸³

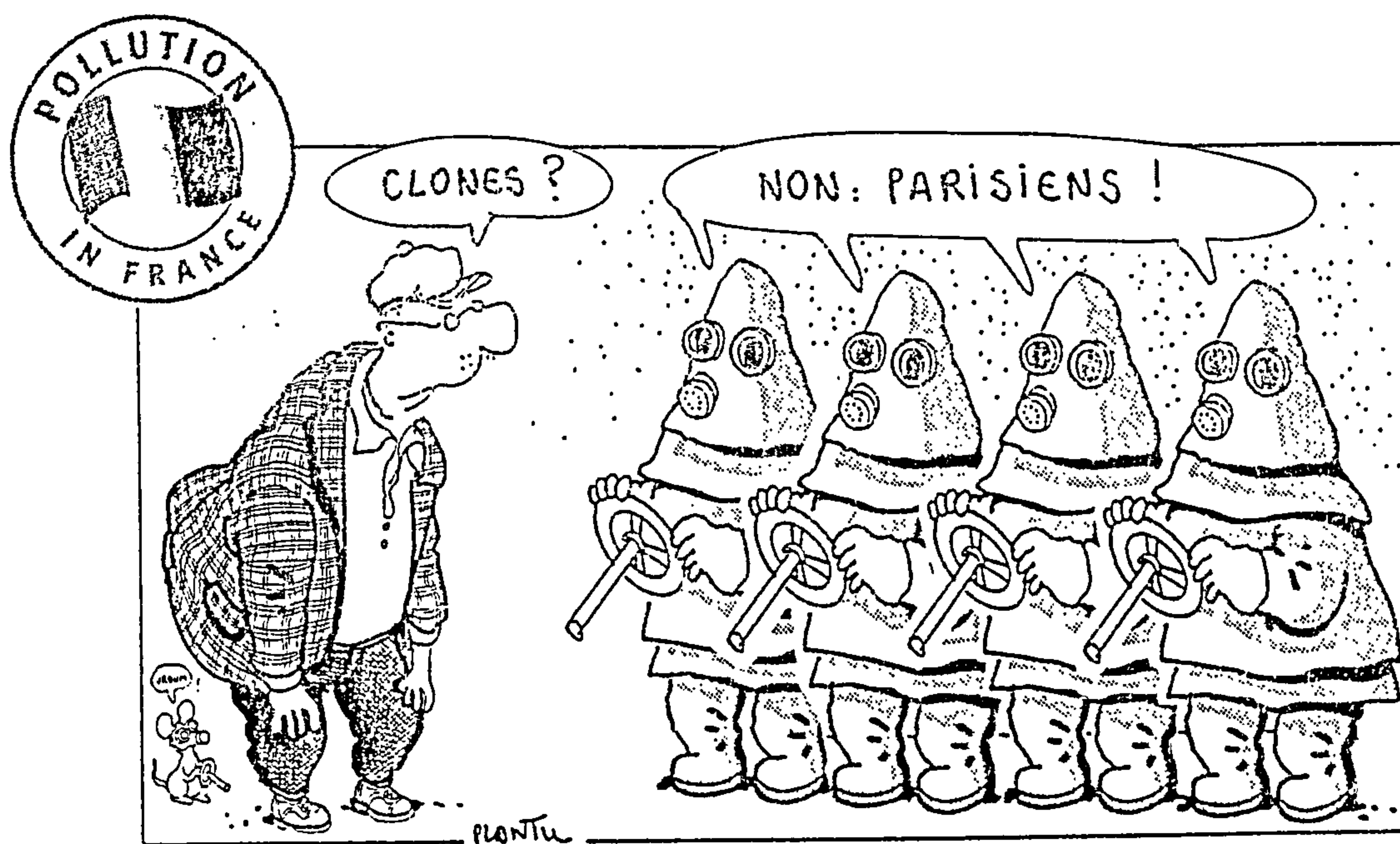
As it is clear from the quotation above, the translator's task is a tough one when it comes to translate the element of humour from one language/culture into another. Yet, humour is one of the essential ingredients of a given culture and sometimes could play an essential role to understand that particular nation and its citizens. As *The Economist* informs its readers at the beginning of the article published on world humour, it is quite possible to get an idea on a nation and its peoples by analysing their jokes and graphic humour. Yet, *The Economist*, as it will be seen in the cartoons given below, finds it necessary to affix a small note on the cartoons to provide a small hint to its readers about the content and make the contents of the materials easy to detect.



Secretary: Ivan Petrovich, an assassin to see you.

Boss: Strange. I don't remember ordering one

⁸³ Sandor Hervey and Ian Higgins. *A Course in Translation Method: French to English*. (London & New York: Routledge. 1992), p. 23.



Then, we are inclined to ask which path a translator of, as in our case, cartoons with rather long speech balloons, should follow? Is there a list of rules for the prospective translator to follow during humour translation? Von Stackelberg has some advice to the prospective translator of humour. After determining the off limits for any translator such as "the translator does not have the right to change so much", "should not be clearer than the original author", and "he should not try to improve on him"⁸⁴, von Stackelberg indicates that the translator should not be allowed to *make us laugh* at his own ideas rather than at those of the author. During the translation, he asserts, the aim of a translator for the humour texts must be

To find the "juste milieu" between being too free and too slavish. The translator's re-creation cannot be identical with the original. Differences of language, of culture, of habits and ways of thinking are to be taken into consideration...*He must not fool the reader into believing that he is reading an original instead of a translation...the reader of a translation accepts that the foreigners in the book he is reading speak his own language, but still remain foreigners.* There is no need to change them into German, no need to make them English, if one is translating into

⁸⁴ Jurgen von Stackelberg. 'Translating Comical Writing'. *Translation Review*, 28 (1988), pp.10-13.

English...Fair play is a condition *sine qua non* of modern translation. This includes that a translator must not make his reader laugh at other ideas than those of the original author. On the other hand, not to make him laugh where he would laugh reading the original author is also missing the point...there may be no general rule for translation, but the genre of the text we translate must be taken into account. A comical text must remain comical in translation... otherwise what we produce is not translation, but falsification.⁸⁵

Von Stackelberg also adds that as long as it makes us smile it is acceptable to add lines that do not occur in the original, or (interchangeably) become an old-fashioned or daringly modern translator, or following the original very closely, or occasionally employing free translation and adding something in the same translation are all acceptable because 'the main thing is that the effect of the translation is the same as the original one: comical writing remains comical writing.'⁸⁶ As it is clear from this approach, Von Stackelberg could only accept a translation of a humorous text as successful as long as it makes him laugh. He does not take into account the fact that not every piece of humour product is aimed to make its receiver laugh and laughter is not the sole indicator of a successful humour interaction.

1.3.6.1 Equivalence, Translation and Humour

According to Delia Chiaro

No matter how well the translator knows the target language, cultural references and polysemous items may well involve them in longwinded explanations, after which the recipient rarely reacts with a laugh. Similarly, when a joke in a foreign language is translated into English, results tend to be equally disastrous. Jokes, it would seem, travel badly.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.10-13. (emphasis as in original)

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 10-13.

⁸⁷ Delia Chiaro. *The Language of Jokes: Analysing Verbal Play*, (London: Routledge, 1992), p.77.

After this comment on jokes, Chiaro explains the failure of a Chinese cartoon that deals with the clash between the old and new values and concludes that, even though the translation was more than adequate, without prior knowledge of Chinese attitudes for a European audience it would be difficult to see or understand the joke. Although this cartoon, a prosaic example by way of drawing, is the only case concerning a possible translation problem of such material in the book, the interesting part comes when Chiaro offers the following conclusion

Of course, not all the westerners will be able to read between the lines of the joke and see it in its entirety. In fact, the analyst himself points out that the translation is, at the same time, an expansion of the original text. While, on the one hand, to the westerner it conveys new information about modern China, *it is still not easy to see why it should be funny, without prior knowledge of Chinese attitudes*⁸⁸.

From this approach, we could assume that at least some jokes could be funny for the westerners if they are accompanied with a proper contextual background information. Yet, there is still no guarantee that, as we have seen in the related chapter, the result would be satisfactory for the recipients. In fact, the whole notion of 'recipient' is rather dubious, as we have seen above, the taste and appreciation of humour could extremely be variable. Chiaro, then, offers another joke translated from the Italian about earthquakes which might be helpful to explain writer's point more clearly. Firstly, Chiaro provides the background for this particular joke, which actually came out after a disaster in 1980, when an earthquake caused so much damage due to the quality and quantity of reinforced concrete used in many of the city's buildings and made it clear that there was an embezzlement of funds. The English translation of the joke is given as follows:

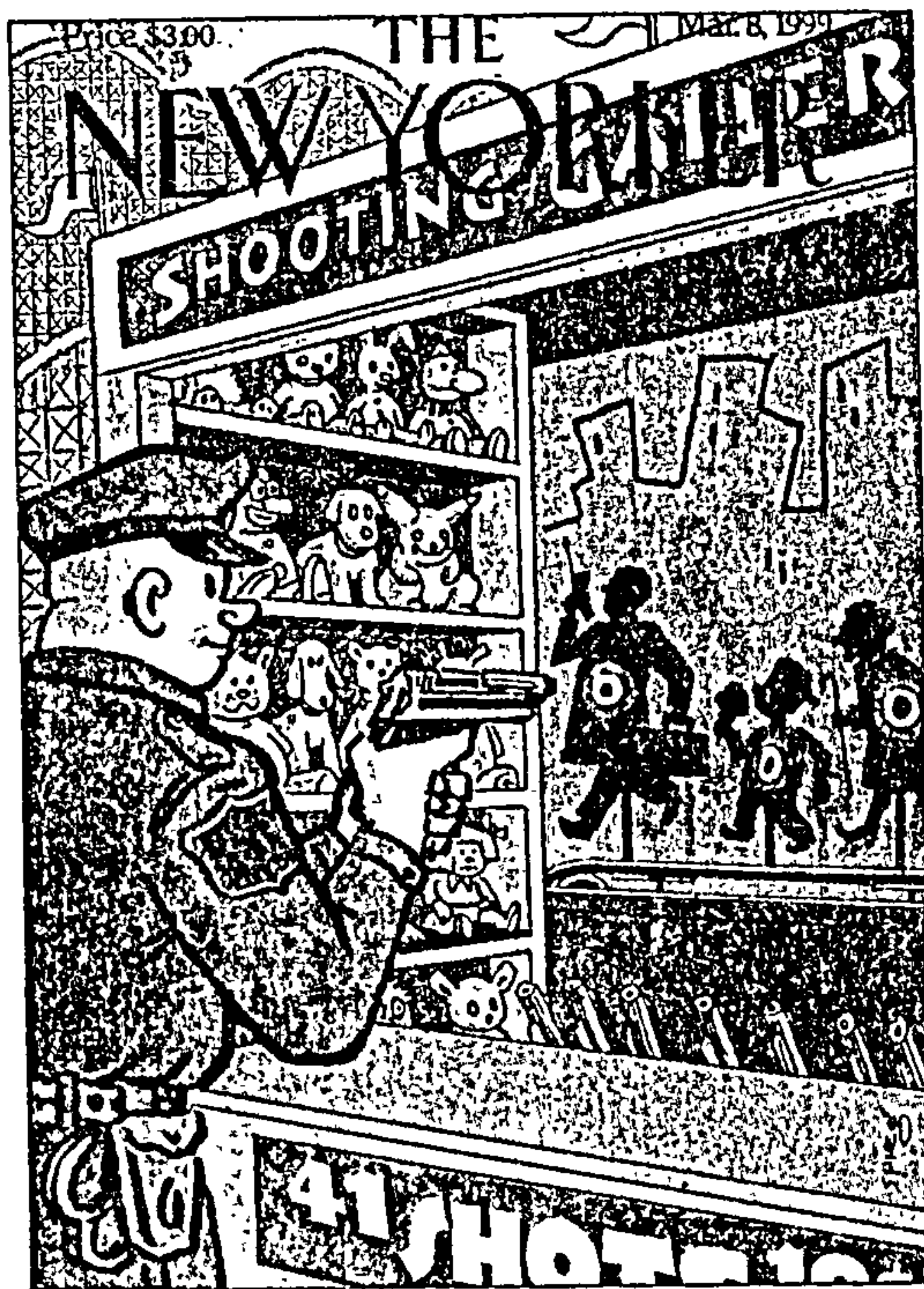
⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 82-3.

"What did the reinforced concrete say when the iron beam asked him how he felt after the earthquake?
-Fine, after all, I wasn't there!"⁸⁹

Chiaro believes that with or without an explanation 'this particular joke can hardly be considered as a joke', which I tend to disagree. Apart from finding this particular joke as a funny one since it fits nicely into my perception of humour and it would not be wrong to assume that this particular joke would still be *meaningful*, not necessarily *funny*, to an average westerner if it is 'reinforced' with prior knowledge. Besides, it would be equally efficient and meaningful in any country whether it comes under similar conditions.⁹⁰ The popular daily broad sheet newspaper *Hürriyet* recently published a news piece about the capture of a serial rapist and someone who had been killed by the police, who mistook him as the dangerous criminal. *Hürriyet* chose to publish a colour reproduction of the cover of the *New Yorker*, which satirised the situation and trigger-happy members of New York Police Department, to announce the news.⁹¹ The newspaper probably assumed that, with the support of explanatory writing under the picture, the cartoon would become meaningful for its readers since the image of a shooting gallery in an amusement park is not a totally alien for Turkish public. Yet, the publishers also find it necessary to add a caption that would lead the reader to the main point: "**polisi eleştiren karikatür** / a cartoon criticised the police".

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp.82-3

⁹⁰ Unfortunately, during the revision of this dissertation, Turkey experienced a devastating earthquake with disastrous results. Afterwards, there was a heated debate on the quality of buildings in the area and the lack of necessary controls over the construction sites. It would not be far-fetched to claim that the victims of this tragedy could associate with a joke given above.



Polisi eleştiren karikatür

New York polisinin tecavüzcü yerine hiç suçu olmayan Amadou Diallo'yu öldürmesi, büyük tepki çekti. Ünlü New Yorker Dergisi, 8 Mart tarihli sayısının kapağına Pulitzer ödüllü karikatürist Art Spiegelman'ın polisi eleştiren bir çalışmasını koydu. Ama en sonunda halkla polisi karşı karşıya getiren tecavüzcü Isaac Jones yakalandı.

In many cases, as Lendvai explains, it is quite necessary to offer some background contextual information to the receiver

The situation, the organisation of a joke, that is, needs an ideal balance between explicitness and implicitness and therefore jokes should be characterised by high degree of implicitness in order to preserve communicative tension before the punch line. Thus, joke-explications must be restricted to the necessary and sufficient level. There is a golden rule of joke-explication: introductory explanations or commentaries must be placed prior to the joke itself. It comes from the very nature of joke telling to apply introductory explanations according to the hearer's background knowledge. A special kind of these commentaries would be the one, which conveys cross-cultural information.⁹²

It is also important, continues Lendvai, not to frustrate the hearer of the joke with the introductory commentary and as Raskin explains, an 'introduction'

⁹¹ *Hürriyet*, 8 April 1999, p. 7.

⁹² E. Lendvai, 'Translating "Untranslatable" Russian Jokes', *XIII FIT World Congress*, vol.1 (1993), 105-109.

of the following kind is quite acceptable within its limits to depict a background of a Russian joke for foreign ears: " A typical Soviet domestic scene: the husband is lying down on the sofa after work and reading the evening paper; the wife is on her knees scrubbing the floor. The neighbour looks in..."⁹³

Lendvai asserts that sometimes culture specific, untranslatable lexical units might create translation difficulties as shown in the following example

- Tovarish Brezhnev!
- K chemu eti tseremonii? Zovite men'a prosto Il' ich.

"Comrade Brezhnev!"
 "What's this formality for? Call me simply Il' ich."

Lendvai states that an introductory commentary such as *"Russians did not like Leonid Il' ich Brezhnev, the communist party leader, however, he wanted to be popular like Vladimir Il' ich Lenin. In Russian terms, the use of the simple patronymic indicates that you are beloved. Lenin used to be so"* would not frustrate the hearer.⁹⁴

1.3.6.2 Meaning and Untranslatability

Another important issue regarding the problem of equivalence in translation of humour could be the question of meaning. As E. D. Hirsch Jr asserts that since the meaning of a work is identical with what the author meant by it at the time of writing, only one interpretation of the text is possible. It is also quite possible that there may be a number of different (and valid) interpretations, Hirsch states, but all of them, 'must move within the 'system of typical expectations and

⁹³ Victor Raskin, *Semantic Mechanisms of Humour*, (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Pub.Co., 1985), p.167.

⁹⁴ E. Lendvai, 'Translating "Untranslatable" Russian Jokes', *XIII FIT World Congress*, vol.1 (1993), 105-109. Lendvai further explains that the Russian patronymic "Il' ich", derives from the male Christian name "Il' a", and has no counterpart in English. Besides, as a form of address, "Il' ich", like patronymics in general, is informal and informal and friendly in its usage. There is an extralinguistic factor, too, which is known in the Russian language community: Lenin and Brezhnev shared the same patronymic. (p.106)

probabilities' which the author's meaning permits'.⁹⁵ He does not deny the fact that a literary work may 'mean' different things to different people at different times. But this, Hirsch claims, is more properly a matter of the work's 'significance' rather than its 'meaning'. Significances vary throughout the history, whereas meanings remain constant; authors put in meanings, whereas readers assign significances. In identifying the meaning of a text with what the author meant by it, Eagleton continues, Hirsch does not presume that we always have access to the author's intentions. He or she may be long dead, or may have forgotten what she intended altogether. It follows that we may sometimes hit on the 'right' interpretation of a text but never be in a position to know this.

There are obvious problems with trying to determine what is going on in somebody's head and then claiming that this is the meaning of a piece of writing. For one thing, great many things are likely to be going on in an author's head at the time of writing. It would, without doubt, be impossible to recover exactly what Shakespeare meant by '*cream-fac'd loon*', so we have to settle for what he might generally have had in mind.⁹⁶ An author's intention is itself a complex 'text' which can be debated, translated and variously interpreted just like any other.⁹⁷

It could be claimed that this situation is not likely to happen meaning wise when one attempts to translate cartoons with speech bubbles. In such cartoons, the cartoonist usually offers his intended meaning or messages openly and does not need to imply them indirectly. The narration in such works is straightforward and,

⁹⁵ E. D. Hirsch Jr. *Validity in Interpretation*, in Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: an introduction*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983; repr. 1990), p.67.

⁹⁶ Ibid.. p. 68.

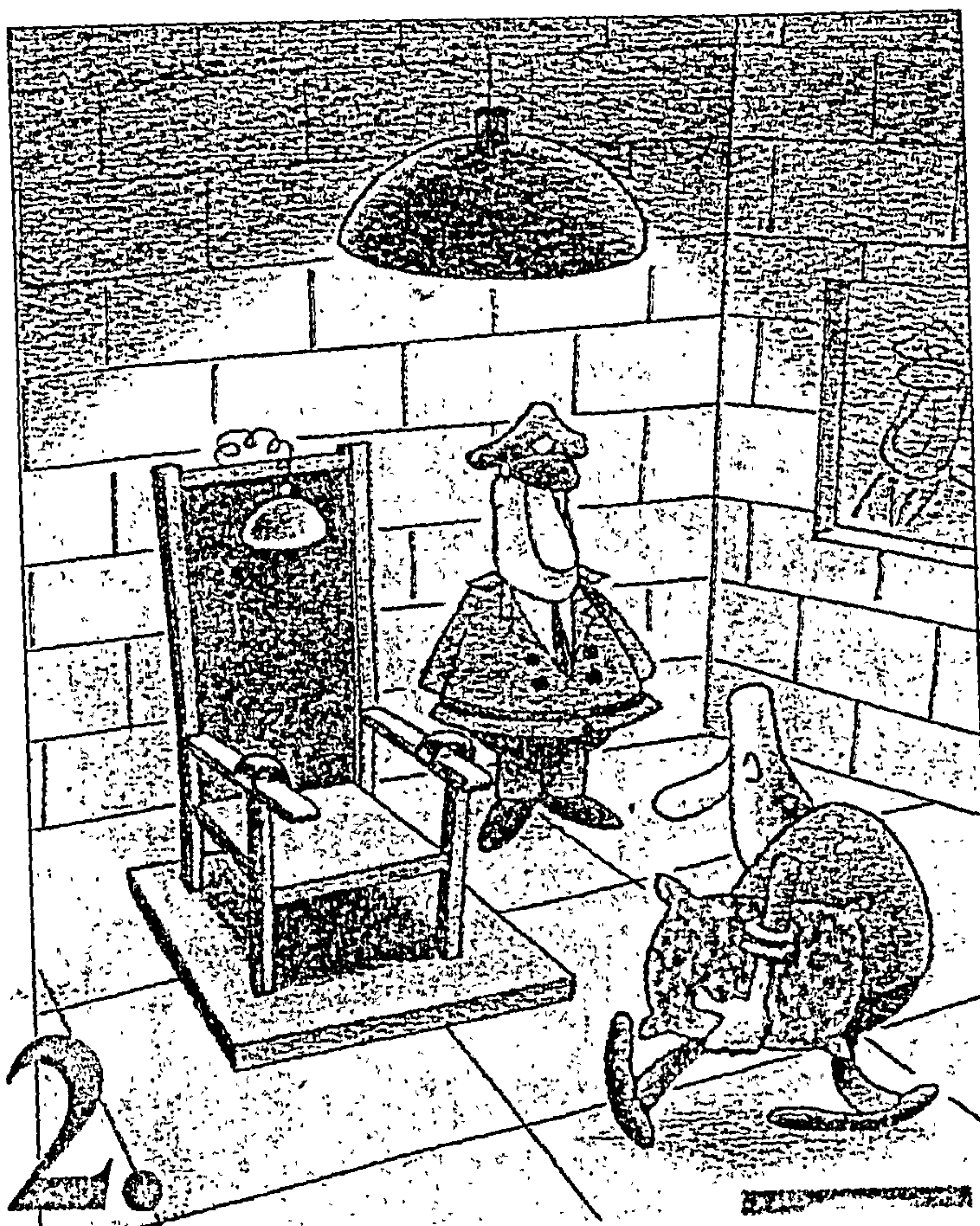
⁹⁷ Ibid.. p. 69.

apart from occasional word play, the language does not go beyond average. The choice of words is not sophisticated and sentences, with some exceptions as in *Öğreten Adam ve Oğlu* (The Man who Teaches & Son) and *Kıllanan Adam* (Bothered Man) are not long and complicated. These cartoons are not open to endless debate, criticism and interpretations.

On the other hand, this type of communication does not take place in cartoons without captions or speech balloons but it is possible to see some occasional words or phrases.

In this case, the reader must use all his/her memory and intellectual background in order to come up with a result which may be or may not be the right one at the end. The following examples are all taken from the Turkey's 16th *International Cartoon Contest of Aydın Doğan Foundation* held in 1999. A prestigious contest, it attracted 301 participants from 87 countries and Romania, Italy and Belgium won the first three awards respectively. First two of these three award-winning cartoons could be given as examples, as opposed to Chiaro's claims above, for both the universality of humour and its openness to the variety of possible interpretations by the audience.

As it could be seen from the examples provided below, it is possible to bring various interpretations to such material because they put the responsibility onto the shoulders of viewer.



As Eagleton explains, if a novel opens with the sentence 'Jack staggered red-nosed out of the pub', it already implies a reader who understands fairly advanced English, knows what a pub is and has cultural knowledge of the connection between alcohol and facial inflammation.⁹⁸ Along with similar lines, Nash also indicates the need for a certain amount of factual knowledge, in his case, shared by humourist and audience

It may be a matter of common historical information- e.g. that Henry VIII had six wives, or that Nelson had one eye, or that Lincoln was assassinated in a theatre. More often, however, it is simply a question of domestic acquaintance with the world and the ordinary substance of living-knowing, say that Coventry is a place in the English midlands (which, according to this writer, might not be that useful to associate or appreciate with the graffito given above until you spent some time there), knowing that in most British towns the buses are double deckers, knowing that the Pope presides over a city called the Vatican, perhaps also knowing that there exists a whisky called *Vat 69* (whence the ancient and child-charming joke that *Vat 69* is the Pope's telephone number). To understand the broadest humour one must be broadly informed, not with the stuff of scholarship but with things that one ought to know before being allowed to board the Clapham omnibus.⁹⁹

In sum, it is apparent that the translation of humour is possible under certain conditions yet it would be futile to try and produce another original. The original should still feel like an original after the translation. The main point is to build a bridge between the monolingual speakers of different cultures. The equivalence is not the primary target to be achieved at the end of a humour translation. Because the understanding of humour is different and various among the cultures, the main goal of a translation of cartoon with speech bubble should convey the intended message without any loss and provide an accurate rendering into target language without any omission.

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp.83-4.

Since there is no definitive description of humour available and it is endlessly variable, it would be reasonable to create a linguistically adequate translation of a cartoon with speech balloon(s) with the help of drawings themselves and deliver the meaning that created the humour without losing its essence and assist the viewers to reach their own conclusions. It is obvious that this dissertation cannot pre-determine on a 'readership profile' to rely on before the translation activity and determine their sense of humour assuming everyone has got one. But, the translation has to be performed nevertheless. Since one of the most important objectives of translation practice is to maintain a cultural communication, the cartoon translation might be another path that leads to understanding and appreciating another culture and nation no matter how far and different they are.¹⁰⁰

Another important point is to maintain a balance between expressing the material's origin and its unfamiliarity to the target culture. Paraphrasing should be avoided at any cost and the element of fun- if any- should be kept intact during its transfer. This point is especially important for the cartoons in *Leman* since, as we will see in the next chapter, those works do not try to be funny in the word's traditional sense.

The matter of whether a text or cartoon is humorous or not should be left to the recipient *after* s/he is supported with adequate amount of contextual and cultural information beforehand. This situation could further be explained thus: all major humour magazines in Turkey are aware about their readership profile. Since majority of these cartoonists live in and around Istanbul their works naturally

⁹⁹ Walter Nash, *The Language of Humour: Style and technique in comic discourse*, (London and New York: Longman, 2nd impression 1986 (1985)), p.4.

¹⁰⁰ For further rendering of this subject with examples, see 'Laughing Matters: you think that's funny?'. *The Economist*, 345, 8048, (1997-1998), 25-27.

reflect people and places their own surroundings. Due to considerable population of Istanbul, at least half of the sales take place in this particular region and buyers are generally more than familiar with the type of humour that is employed in *Leman* since those cartoons are the representations of their daily lives. The readers in the provinces do not have first hand experiences of Istanbul that would help them to appreciate the humour in the magazine but their constant (or repetitive) visual and verbal exposure to such material provide the necessary background and contextual information in the long run. It is possible to draw a parallelism between this kind of reader and some foreign reader from another culture, since without adequate background information-though its amount would not be the same- both would find it difficult to rate such material. It's obvious that, both sides are in a similar position in this case because they probably do not have first hand experiences in that particular environment for some considerable time and many 'tales' depicted in those cartoons would feel alien to them. One other essential aspect to understand and appreciate "other" humour, apart from the necessary background and contextual information, is to feel the urge to participate and learn about that culture.

CHAPTER II

2.1 Turkish Humor: An Overview

“A Jannissary Ağa hears the story of crucifixion of Jesus Christ by the Jews. He hits the street and grabs the first Jew passer-by and puts his dagger to his throat: ‘You worthless shit’ he roars furiously, ‘It was your lot that killed Jesus, then..!’ The Jew, trying to save his life, starts begging: ‘Have mercy my Pasha, that happened 1800 years ago.’ Jannissary gets more furious: ‘So what? I heard it now’”.

The present situation of contemporary Turkish cartoon and the legacy that it now presents could be seen more clearly within the framework of Ottoman/Turkish humour. It could be divided into two main periods: tradition of oral humour and written/pictorial humour. The period between reformation period (the *Tanzimat*) and Republican era constitutes a kind of transitory period. However, contemporary humour scene did not sever its relation with previous eras. Many humour periodicals, as it will be seen further, were published under the names of famous and well known comic characters of the past such as *Nasreddin Hodja*, *İncili Çavuş* or *Meddah* as well as cartoons which were, sometimes loosely, based on them.

2.1.1 Oral / Spoken Tradition

Humour products from this period are mostly anonymous which passed from one generation to another orally. Especially jokes are based on well-known public figures such as *Nasreddin Hodja* or *Bekthasi*. During this transportation, inevitably, some changes occurred in the contents and the message to make them more accessible and contemporary. Probably the most famous character in these jokes is *Nasreddin Hodja*. Jokes concerning him are simply countless. His popularity continued into the written era and reached to other generations by his endlessly anthologised jokes. It could be said that *Nasreddin Hodja* has the

function of uniting these two eras of humour. A recent example taken from a young cartoonist with a nihilistic-punk background would illustrate this point more clearly



- " Well, my hodja, I see that my cauldron that I've lent you gave birth to this baby cauldron... Yet, is it strangely resembles you or is it just my imagination? What's goin' on here?"¹

Another equally important figure from this period is traditional Turkish puppet theatre and its main representative, *Karagöz*. It would probably be safe to claim that present cartoons- particularly in *Leman*- are most likely direct descendants of *Karagöz* which arrived in Turkey around the 16th century.² There

¹ Bülent Üstün, *Kabız Kuğu / A Constipated Swan* (İstanbul: Dört M Basın ve yayıncılık Ltd., 1996), p. 87.

² The element of humour has always been the backbone of *Karagöz*. *Karagöz* brings humour forward by exhibiting characters from all walks of life and with various word plays in order to create a social criticism. Two main characters of the play, *Karagöz* and *Hacivat* bring the conflict between/within the ranks of elite and common people. *Karagöz* was acted out in coffee houses, a popular meeting place of the majority. Many problems and current topics were told/reflected through these two main characters. *Karagöz* (literally "the black eye") is the bearer of the title role in the shadow theatre from which the theatre takes its name *Karagöz*. Metin And, *Karagöz: Turkish Shadow Theatre* (İstanbul: Dost Publication, 2nd revised edn, 1979)

is enough evidence to believe that political and especially social satire was the basis of early *Karagöz* shows until the censorship became very rigid.



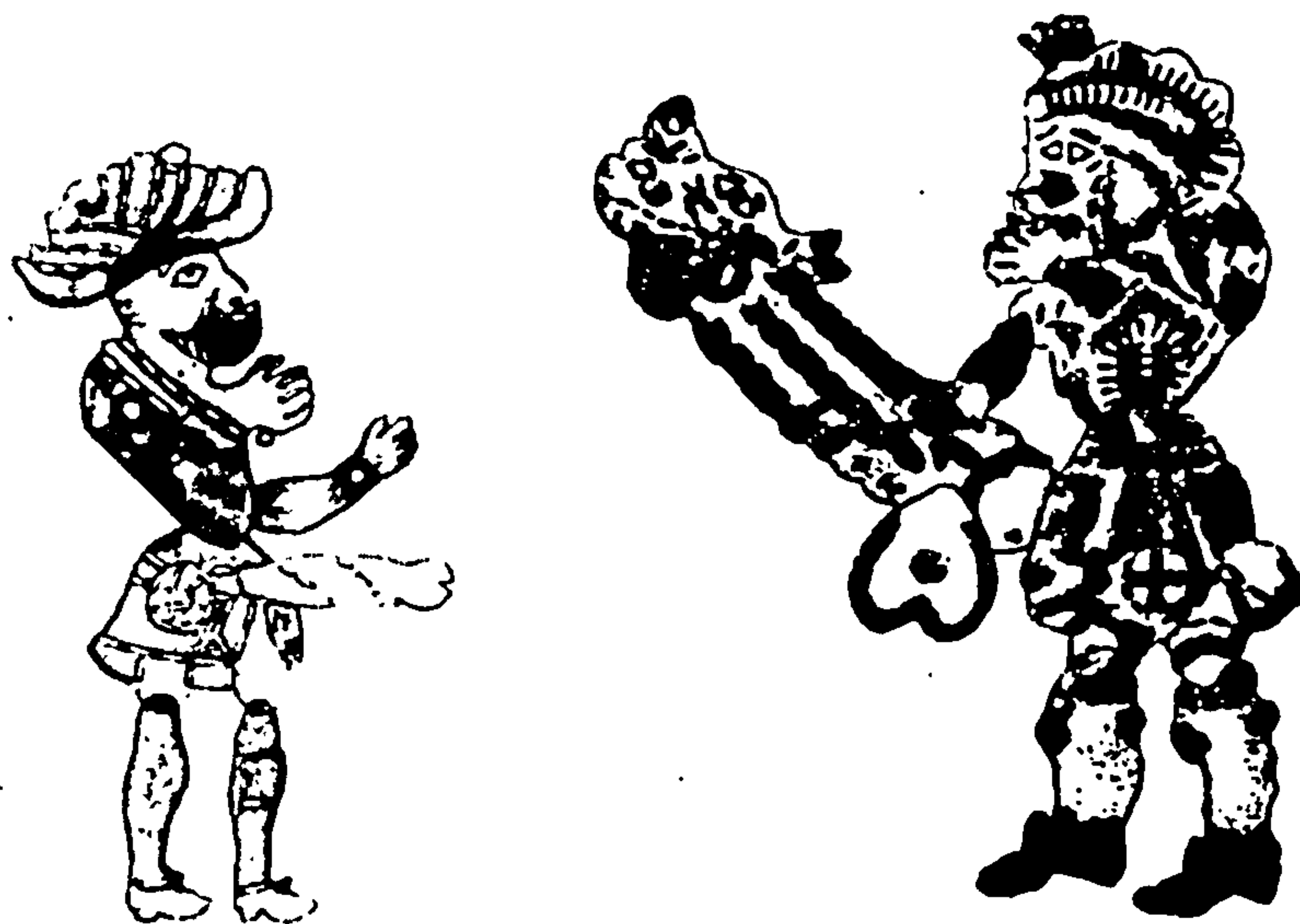
Hacivat (on the left) and Karagöz

The play was used as a political weapon to criticise local political and social abuse to a degree in a country ruled by an absolute monarchy and a totalitarian regime which many foreign witnesses of that period -first half of the 19th century- found difficult to believe. An eyewitness' account supports the freedom *Karagöz* displayed during its heyday

Karagöz defies the censorship, enjoying an unlimited freedom. Even the press in Europe is not aggressive. Countries like America, England and France are much more restricted in political criticism than Turkey, which is a country ruled by an absolute monarch. *Karagöz* acts like some sort of unfettered press.³

³ Metin And. *Karagöz: Turkish Shadow Theatre* (Istanbul: Dost Publication, 2nd revised edn, 1979), p 84.

According to And, another important aspect of the *Karagöz* play which later reflected in Turkish cartoon is its obscenity and extreme licentiousness. It was also normal to see women and children in some performances in which, as one observer recalls, spectators could watch 'a scene with the 'fair ladies' which I may not describe-not even in Latin'⁴. Several *Karagöz* figures bearing a phallus still exist and one other particular aspect of *Karagöz* shows that modern Turkish cartoon inherited is the open display of the male sexual organ.



There are some other traces in *Karagöz* plays that make us realise that contemporary Turkish cartoon particularly those in *Leman* owe their very existence to that particular shadow play. Three recent examples, one taken from a series of advertisements for life insurance and the other two from humour magazines, reflecting the recent usage of this shadow play are presented below

⁴ Ibid., p. 85.



- Hacivat (on the left): " We've broken the screen, laid waste the screen!.
- Karagöz: Let's go and buy Anadolu Life Insurance at once!⁵

The following cartoon taken from *Leman's Lombok* section and depicts a private seance for men in a coffee house during the Ottoman times with a difference. The show itself is a pornographic screening of a Karagöz play and a cheerful send-up to one the most interesting characteristics of this shadow play.

⁵ The English translation of the original final scene between Karagöz and Hacivat by Andrea Tietze recommended by Professor Metin And. (Personal communication, Ankara, April 1999)



The Puppet Master: - "Oohhh... Aaahhh! How plump and buxom you're, my sweetie!

The Man: - Watch out!!! The watchmen are coming... Switch to normal Karagöz and Hacıvat, quick!

The third example is also from Bülent Üstün and is a very interesting example for two reasons. Firstly, Üstün sends-up to director Alfred Hitchcock's probably most (in) famous movie *Psycho* (1960) and secondly, craftily uses the figure of Karagöz within this contemporary setting. By doing so, Üstün assumes

that his readership is already familiar with the film and its most famous shower scene.⁶



Exaggeration, always an important device to create humour, was a common resource in *Karagöz*, for example in a play called *Ferhad and Şirin*, when *Ferhad* lost consciousness every time he sees his sweetheart. It is possible to assume that this character directly opened the way to the regular character *Ediz* created by Metin Fidan in *Leman*. This character is depicted as an extremely sensitive individual in his small world who passes out at every given opportunity, mostly for very trivial reasons.

Other excesses in *Karagöz* plays, such as madness, exaggerated madness, the blasting threats and the rage of the various characters have all their counterparts in various *Leman* cartoons. Other appearances in *Karagöz* are certain

⁶ In the movie, "Janet Leigh pilfers some money from her boss and runs away to rendezvous her lover at a motel. The motel owner's son, Norman Bates (Anthony Hopkins) lives in a spooky gothic mansion nearby and fixes her some sandwiches. As she takes her shower before bed, she vaguely sees the form of a matronly woman approaching the shower curtain. Before she can figure out what's up, and before the audience can either, a knife plunges through the curtain and repeatedly stabs her. Streams of her blood mix with shower water, washing down the drain." Jonathan Sternfield, *The Look of Horror: scary moments from scary movies* (New York: Moore & Moore Pub., 1990), p55.

types such as clowns, grotesque physical peculiarities, hunchbacks, stammers, dwarfs and assorted madmen, enchanted with plenty of rude noisy action, acrobatics and continual beatings of the wrong person by mistake⁷. Even the tradition of having stock characters in this shadow play such as *Çelebi*-dandy-, *Matiz*-drunkard-, *Tiryaki*-the opium addict-, *Külhanbeyi* -the rowdy- all found their counterparts in the cartoons of *Leman* and other contemporary and popular humour magazines. Maybe the most important modern day reflection from this play is *Hacivat*. We see at least three reflections in the shape of **Öğreten Adam ve Oğlu** (The Man who Teaches & Son), **Erdener Abi** (Our Brother Erdener), and **Kıllanan Adam** (Bothered Man) as *Leman*'s stock characters almost four-hundred years later.

One of the most important aspect of *Karagöz* plays in relation to contemporary Turkish cartoon and some of its stock characters lies in the story structure in which

the main plot involves various types of people with different costumes, manners and dialects. The plots contain very little intrigue and action is only incidental. One important structural characteristic of these plots is that they are what we can call 'open form' or 'flexible form'. That is, each episode is an entity in itself and independent so that in each different performance these episodes could change places, could be reduced, added to or subtracted from according to the audience's reaction or the puppeteer's wishes, without upsetting the general course.⁸

⁷ Ibid., p.65.

⁸ Ibid., p.76.

⁹Turgut Çeviker, *Gelişim Sürecinde Türk Karikatürü/Early Turkish Cartoon, 1867-1878 and 1878-1908*, (Istanbul: Adam Publications, 1986) pp., 44-5

2.1.2 Turkish Cartoon: an overview

Turgut Çeviker, a cartoon and humour historian in Turkey, observes that Turkish cartoon "has started from the bottom. It came into existence as a result of Turkey's struggle to become a modern and westernised country in order to survive."⁹

The birth of Turkish cartoon marks the end of the oral-humour era and coincides with the efforts of the intelligentsia to create a new nation that would be in the same league with other developed western countries and save itself from an apparent disintegration. In order to achieve this aim the cartoon seemed to be a suitable tool since one of the main components of the cartoon is to criticise, sometimes mercilessly, the functioning body of the state and society in order to obtain freedom for both the artist and society.

The most important development for the cultural life of the Ottoman Empire during this period was the printing of Turkish language books for the first time in 1727 and Sultan Mahmud II's wish to set up an Ottoman Press to provide a regular Ottoman newspaper within the empire in order to enlighten his subjects. The end product was *The Takvim-i Vekay-i* (Calendar of Events) and due to its impact the way was opened for the development of an Ottoman press in subsequent years.¹⁰

2.1.3 Birth of the Modern Turkish Cartoon: Tanzimat (1867-1878)

The minorities took the lead in the field of humour publications. Especially the Armenian community had already established themselves within the empire as a culturally well-developed entity and their influence on Turkish

⁸ Ibid., pp. 65-66

¹⁰ J.S. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey; vol.: II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: the Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*, (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 230-235.

humour should be acknowledged. The first ever cartoon in the Ottoman Empire was published in T.Gigrigyan's critical study of humour (1856) called *Intemelutyun Indasa* (Armağanın Kabulü: The Acceptance of the Present).¹¹

The forerunner of Turkish humour publications was published in the form of a supplement of *Terraki* newspaper starting with 1869. It is called *Terraki Eğlence* (The Terraki Entertainment), and continued to come out in two different formats twice a week and it was this supplement that carried first ever cartoons on its pages.

Diyojen

The first- ever regular humour periodical in Ottoman Empire was *Diyojen*, which started its life at the end of 1870.¹² Teodor Kasap published *Diyojen* first in Armenian, then in Ottoman Turkish. The first 62 issues carried the masthead "*Don't cast your shadow on me, that's the only favour I'm asking from you*" which was attributed to the philosopher Diogenes. Its publication was suspended four times due to its severe criticism of the state and finally shut down in 1873. Same year, Teodor Kasap launched another influential humour magazine called *Hayal* (Dream). Its content was heavily based on the types of *Karagöz and Hacivat*. Its end came when it started to criticise the government harshly for its press regulations. Kasap was put in jail for three years.

¹¹ Although I cannot confirm, the name (or the expression) *Gırgır*, literally 'to pull someone's leg' or 'telling jokes', would have emerged from the name of Mr. Gigrigyan since Oğuz Aral has an extensive knowledge on Turkish cartoon history.

¹² It interesting to note that in early 1998, Mr. Turgut Çeviker started to publish a weekly humour magazine titled *Diyojen* under his editorship and with contributions from some other well known humourists in Turkey. *Diyojen's* approach to humour was to employ fewer graphics and having more humorous prose in the direction of re-launched *Punch* during the mid 90's. At the time of writing, *Diyojen* had to stop its publication due to insufficient sales.



The Masthead of *Diyogen*

2.1.4. Cartoon Drawing during the Tanzimat Era

Cartoons in the Tanzimat era were both written and pictorial and there was a tendency towards the usage of *Karagöz*. It was used to analyse current affairs and problems both domestic and external. Cartoons mostly drawn with captions and cartoonists employed alliterations, word plays and various jokes abundantly. The exaggeration in human features was intense. Most cartoons in this period were based on various jokes attributed to certain characters such as *Bektaşî* (Bekthasi), *İncili Çavuş* (The Pearly Sergeant), *Nasreddin Hodja*, *Bekri Mustafa* (Bekri the Drunkard) to the extent that some historians even claimed that the old cartoons were simply illustrations of the jokes and to some degree it is acceptable.

2.1.5 The Reign of Abdülhamit II, The Young Turk Movement and Cartoon

Internal political developments resulted in the first ever Ottoman constitution in December 23, 1876. It was created in order to put a limit on Sultan's power. Abdülhamit II was brought to the throne and he agreed to accept

the constitution. But he later changed his mind, found an excuse, abandoned the constitution and dissolved the Parliament in 1877 not to be recalled until 1908.

Newly enacted legislation prohibited public criticism of officials, held the press financially responsible for errors made in reporting and prohibited publications of satirical journals altogether.¹³ Criticism of the Sultan was strictly forbidden. Certain suggestive words, such as 'anarchy', 'liberty', 'strike', 'constitution', 'revolution', 'assassination', 'socialism' and 'dynamite' could not be permitted.

One of the groups, which severely criticised the government during this era, was Young Ottomans whose figurehead was Namık Kemal. As a famous poet and playwright, his influence was considerable on reformers and he helped to form and popularise the idea of a constitution and loyalty to the Ottoman fatherland. But due to one of those unexpected turns in the universe of humour and no apparent reason at all, his name became synonymous with extremely explicit jokes told chiefly among the male population of contemporary Turkey.

In these jokes, Kemal is depicted as someone with enormous sexual power and appetite with appropriate genitals to match, performing impossible and unbelievable sexual deeds. Although many of his 'adventures' are appropriately set in the late 19th century, in which he seems to be occupied with the members of the Sultan's court, his personality could be adapted into any setting and period of time. As could be seen in the cartoon below, almost all the jokes concerning him opens with the same line: "One day, Namık Kemal was ...". The language in these jokes, as expected, is crammed with slang and often very explicit.



(*Pişmiş Kelle*: June/1991)

- "I don't know which satellite channel is this, but they sure got some good porno stuff! Bravo!"
- TV presenter: "One day Namık Kemal was on his way and sees this wonderful broad and ..."

Those young officials were the products of Tanzimat who have been frequently referred as "Young Turks" by the Europeans to describe their group. They were quite discontented with both the international and the domestic situation and their real medium of struggle was the press and through their use of the press, they began to create a public opinion while introducing concepts such as

¹³ Bernard Lewis. *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 330; H. R. Davison., *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 251-3

parliamentarism, nationalism, and patriotism into the Ottoman political consciousness.¹⁴

They went into exile in various European cities such as Paris, London, Geneva, and Bucharest and countries like Egypt, Brazil and the USA. During their exile, they published journals, newspapers and magazines in which they also printed cartoons and many of these reached Istanbul and were read by the intellectuals. Among those magazines, we see *Hayal* (Dream, Paris, 1878), *İstikbal* (The Future, Geneva, 1880) and *Kanunî Esasi* (Cairo, 1897), *El Rakib* (The Opponent, Rio de Janeiro,?), *El Eyyam* (New York, ?) and *Hamidiye* (London, 1896).¹⁵ Many of these publications prepared the atmosphere to dethrone Abdülhamit II in 1908. After the Young Turk revolution in 1908, in the wake of a freedom for the press not known until then, newspapers and magazines literally blossomed overnight. Çeviker states that there were more than 90 humour magazines and newspapers published within two or three days just after the declaration of the second constitution.¹⁶

2.1.6. Turkish Cartoon during the War of Independence

. During the war for Turkish Independence, there were two opposing camps: those supporting Mustafa Kemal and his forces, Kuva-yi Milliye and those supporting the palace in Istanbul and Allied Forces. The only existing humour publication was *Karagöz* (1908-1935) with more than 20.000 readers. In each issue, it published two cartoons dealing with the current political events and social

¹⁴ E.E. Ramsaur Jr., *The Young Turks: prelude to the revolution of 1908*, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957), pp. 130-6 and *Reform, Revolution and Republic*, pp.385-8.

¹⁵ Turgut Çeviker, *Early Turkish Cartoon, 1867/1878 and 1878-1908*, (Istanbul: Adam Publications, 1986), pp.271-5. Çeviker also states that *Hayal* is probably the oldest humour magazine published by the Young Turks abroad.

¹⁶ Turgut Çeviker, *Early Turkish Cartoon, Constitutional Period, 1908-1918*, (Istanbul: Adam Publications, 1986), pp.17-9.

issues respectively. Those cartoons were with captions in order to make them accessible to the man on the street. Main figures/narrators were always *Karagöz* and *Hacivat* and they used the language of the people during their 'explanations' of the situation in question, a trend that would later find its reflection on the covers of *Gırgır* during the seventies.

During the first days of the truce, *Diken* (The Thorn) started its publication as a successor of both *Kalem* (The Pen, 1908-1911) and *Cem* (1910-1912), which were considered as the cornerstones of the modern Turkish cartoon. *Diken* was the first ever all in colour humour magazine among the Turkish humour magazines. Although the actual war was a multi-national affair, the main enemy in the cartoons was the Greek Army. For the cartoonists, the war was between Turkey and Greece. In their cartoons, the Turkish soldier was depicted as brave, humane, forgiving and possessing all the good qualities whereas the Greek soldier was depicted as cowardly, weak, submissive, treacherous, sluggish, and plundering.¹⁷

Güleryüz (A Smiling Face) and *Aydede* (The Moon) were in opposing camps during the war by supporting or opposing Mustafa Kemal and his forces. "These two magazines" observes Çeviker, "were the main cast of characters in that war between humour magazines during this period so much that, the whole investigation of the cartoon during the war of independence could easily be build around them"¹⁸.

To sum up, probably the most significant feature of this period concerning the cartoon drawing is the stereotyping of *Karagöz* and *Hacivat*. Instead of being drawn in a similar way to their appearances on the white screen,

¹⁷ Ibid., pp.22-23.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp.26-29.

they started to appear in three-dimensional form in the cartoons. But their considerable significance at the beginning of Turkish cartoon during the Tanzimat started to diminish ¹⁹.

2.1.7 Humour and Cartoon during the Republican Era

Until the publication of *Leman*, the entire period of republic could be described briefly as follows:

Between 1923 and 1925, *Akhaba* (The Vulture) started its considerably long life span. In cartoons, the male characters continued to reflect the old way of life. The introduction of Latin alphabet between 1925-1930 in place of Arabic turned the whole cultural life in the country upside down. Many publications including humour magazines were forced to shut their doors permanently because the rate of literacy was so low ²⁰. Cemal Nadir's strip character *Amcabey* (Our Uncle) became a symbol and aimed to provide people an easy access to new ideas and new ways of living. During the Second World War Turkey was neutral and there was an intense publication of cartoon albums. Apart from some best-selling humour magazines like *Akhaba*, *Karikatür* and *Amcabey*, some other regional humour magazines such as *Köroğlu* and *Köylü* (The Peasant) also started to function as newspapers to the extent that people who were living in the provinces actually started to believe what they read in them.

¹⁹ According to Öngören, there are two main reasons for the extinction of *Karagöz*. Firstly, *Hacivat*-the one with brains- could not cope with the developing and advancing West and became just another *Karagöz*, an ordinary person without any significant distinction. Secondly, all the ethnic minorities, who succeeded to live together for a long time on the white screen in a harmony, were no longer friends after so many bitter arguments and fights and without those side characters, it became an almost impossible task to perform a regular *Karagöz* performance. (Ferit Öngören, "Turkish Humour and Cartoon" in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi/ Encyclopaedia of Republican Era of Turkey* (Istanbul: İletişim Publications, vol.5), pp.1426-1432.

²⁰ One of the first humour publication in the new alphabet was 'The Tales of Nasreddin Hodja' and, since almost everyone was familiar with him and his jokes, this book and others in the same vein have successfully been used as text books to teach the new writing to the people

Most important development for the period between 1945 and 1950 was the establishment of a new political party called the *Democrat Party*. One of the crucial factors behind its victory is a humour magazine called *Marko Paşa* (Marko Pasha, from 1946 to late 1950's). Its creators were among the prominent writers and cartoonists of humour such as Aziz Nesin, Rıfat Ilgaz and Mim Uykusuz. They asked for a real, western type of democracy and used the only weapon they had for this purpose: humour. According to Nesin, there was no real pressure imposed by the authority on humour publications before *Marko Paşa* since the conditions for political humour simply did not exist.²¹ During the life span of *Marko Paşa*, its staff were repeatedly arrested, taken into custody, imprisoned and even sent to exile for many times. The reason behind these tough measures was the fact that it was the first time a political authority, including the Tanzimat and the second constitutional era, has become a target of such savage criticism and humiliation in front of the public²². *Akbaba* closed its doors once more during this period.

After the general election of 1950, came a period which was especially fertile for new and talented artists. Among them *Oğuz Aral* who was to become the creator of *Gırgır* in the early seventies. European cartoonists paved the way to 'black humour'. The irrelevant use of details in cartoons vanished and cartoonists

(Ferit Öngören, "Turkish Humour and Cartoon" in *Encyclopaedia of Republican Era of Turkey* (Istanbul: İletişim Publications, vol.5), pp.1426-1432.

²¹ Aziz Nesin, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türk Mizahı /Turkish Humour During the Republican Era* (Istanbul: Akbaba Publications, 1973), pp.5-8.

²² For further information on the publishing history of this crucially important humour magazine see Aziz Nesin, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türk Mizahı /Turkish Humour During the Republican Era* (Istanbul: Akbaba Publications, 1973), pp.5-8, Ferit Öngören, "Turkish Humour and Cartoon" in *Encyclopaedia of Republican Era of Turkey* (Istanbul: İletişim Publications, vol.5). pp.1426-1432.; Semra Atılgan, "Kibrit Suyu, Aziz Nesin ve Markopaşa"/ "All of them deserve extirpation: Aziz Nesin and Markopaşa" in *Cumhuriyet Dergi*, 30 July, 1995, number 488, pp.3-5.

opted for a single type or character in their works by creating unique characters which will re-emerge especially during the second half of the 90's.

For humour, 1960-1970 was a period of recession. Front-page cartoons became repetitive and ineffective. *Akhaha* opened its doors to young, talented and unemployed caricaturists and writers. This approach will similarly be repeated by *Öğuz Aral* during the heyday of *Gırgır* by employing young and talented amateurs living in poor neighbourhoods whose only wish was to draw cartoons.

Between 1970 to 1980, a wave of domestic immigration started towards big cities in the west, especially Istanbul. The importance of television became evident. Humour began its recovery by the support of an unexpected source: a young generation which was brought to big city by immigration and grew up- often under very difficult conditions- in *gecekondu* (shanty towns) scattered around the city.

These young people grew up under the influence of both provincial and urban cultures. As a result of this, they found it difficult to maintain a relationship with the city. Making money and becoming successful in any way became the only objectives of this generation. As a result of this approach, they built their own world, which is more visible in Istanbul than anywhere else in Turkey²³. Many traces of their world in the streets of Istanbul, which was considered as 'holy' by the intelligentsia, used to be spotted in cartoons of humour magazines such as *Limon*, *Pişmiş Kelle* and *Hıbr*.²⁴

²³ For the last ten years, there is a dramatic shift of aggression towards other 'western style' fast foods and their ever-eager consumers who desperately wanted to become a part of the culture which it. Nowadays, cartoons concerning with people who frequent the city centre to eat their favourite meals and spit on to the pavement seem to lose their importance simply because the reader does not care about such details. These people are not one of the most important items on the agenda of Turkish social life in big cities anymore.

²⁴ There is one common ingredient in all those social changes: *Arabesk*. In Turkish context the word *arabesk* (arabesque) does not correspond to its standard dictionary meaning, which usually defines the word either 1. a position in ballet dancing or 2. a flowing decorative line or

To sum up again, cartoonists of this era brought the elements of surprise and shock forward in their works. The introduction of the offset technique made cartoon publication easier and due to increasing demand, cartoonists and cartoons started to become hot property.

All these developments bring us to another cornerstone humour magazine which opened the way for today's popular humour magazines: *Girgir*. *Girgir* succeeded to overcome a tradition of almost fifty years that set by *Akhaha* and established a direct contact with its readers to a degree that it finally began to include these people into its regular staff which would also become a common practice among its spin off magazines.

2.2. GIRGIR AND LEMAN

After four years of absence, famous English humour magazine *Punch* announced its return as a weekly publication in September 1996.²⁵ An article about this comeback published in *The Independent* newspaper is interesting in regard to this dissertation since it includes a comment on the cartoon genre given

pattern. In contemporary Turkish culture it has become a concept, a way of life which seems to dominate Turkish society-or at least its majority- from the early 1970's to the present. The term could be best translated into English as "Arabish", not something quite Arab in origin but heavily affected by it. Arabesk is also used for a certain type of eastern-music played by western-instruments. This phenomena first appeared in mid-seventies songs by popular singers of the period and rapidly became popular among the masses especially those who came to Istanbul by large numbers as a result of heavy domestic immigration that started during the sixties and found themselves in shanty towns along the outer reaches of this giant metropolis. (İsmail Cem, *Geçiş Dönemi Türkiye'si: 1981-1984/Turkey in Transition: 1981-1984*, (Istanbul, Cem Yayınevi, 3rd printing. 1993) pp.178-9).

²⁵ *Punch* was founded in 1841. It took its name from the puppet character Punch. Falling circulation led to its demise in 1992. After its rebirth similar to Turkish humour magazine *Akhaha* mentioned above, it disappeared to come back again in May 1997 with an editorial explanation as follows: 'While it may appear that we're relaunching the relaunched version of the world's most famous British humour magazine, a magazine that has been relaunched with excruciating regularity since 1841, don't be deceived by mere appearances. THIS VALUABLE COLLECTOR'S EDITION IS THE FIRST OFFICIAL RE-RELAUNCHED ISSUE OF

by Peter McKay, the editor of new *Punch*.²⁶ His observations would give us some hints about the new direction of modern cartoon in Britain, a country which is responsible for the birth of modern caricature as we know it today. McKay observes that

Cartoons have become very *grungy*, *not very well drawn*. Young cartoonists have tended to sneer, to try to make some *deep sociological point*. It's been a bad age for cartoons recently. Newspapers have encouraged cartoonists to make clever satirical points. But I'm bored to death with satire. It's sour and heavy and boring".²⁷

In the same article the new direction of *Punch* was described as "a gentle humour, an immediate visual joke and the *lack of a satirical caption* in this age of non-satirical cartoon".²⁸ Contrary to this attitude towards graphic humour, *Leman* never intended to become a publication like this version of *Punch* from the first day. The captions, speech balloons, extensive press cuttings accompanying its cartoons, and sometimes rather long articles scattered in the magazine, written by people who are usually considered outside the humour circles are always welcomed in its pages. Its intense and sometimes savage satirical graphic work is quite a contrast against *Punch's* gentle humour.

As we have seen so far, the roots of humour that *Leman* employs today could be traced back to the days of Turkish Shadow Theatre *Karagöz* and some other distinctive Turkish humour magazines such as *Diyojen*, *Akbaba*, *Marko Paşa* and finally *Gırgır*. All these magazines contributed to the background that created and shaped *Leman* within the context of present day Turkish humour. But

PUNCH EVER TO HIT THE NEWSSTANDS THIS MONTH. *Punch*, May 24, 1997, 21, p.3
(Capitals as in original)

²⁶ *The Independent*, Friday 23 August 1996, p.7.

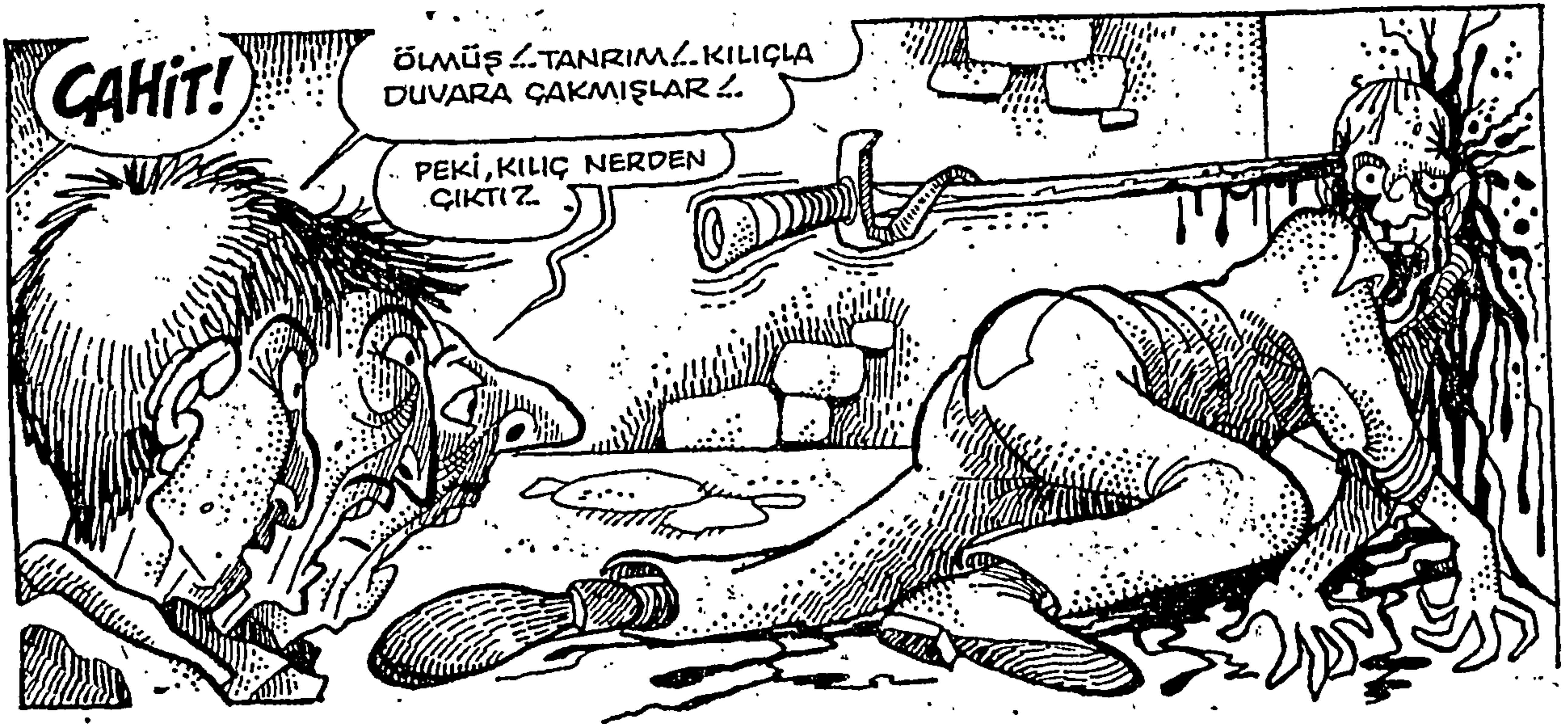
²⁷ *Ibid.*, (my emphasis)

²⁸ *Ibid.*,

Gırgır, without doubt, is the starting point for today's popular humour magazines, including *Leman*.

During its heyday, *Gırgır* became the world's third best selling humour magazine after American *Mad* and Russian *Crocodile*.²⁹ Its reader profile was considerably diverse, covering people from all walks of life. Galip Tekin, one of the most popular and controversial cartoonists from that era comments

As you know, I was drawing very bloody, horrific and controversial scenes in my stories. Well, I'm still working along the same lines but at that time we, I and Oğuz Aral [founder and editor of *Gırgır* during that period], discovered that, judging from the reader's letters, that my fans were mostly young school girls and housewives which was very surprising when you consider the period and the nature of the material I was dealing.³⁰



An example of violence in Tekin taken from one of his stories (Avni: June/1990)

- " CAHİT!"
- "He's dead... My God.. He's nailed to the wall with a sword!
- "But... How come there's a sword in this room?"

²⁹ This title of being the third best selling humour magazine is still a matter of debate among the circles of humour since there was no official sales reports or documents to prove that achievement.



(Avni: December/1989)

- "Ohhh!... Where's this main ship?

- "Oh, that one! He was trying to save Jesus, so we've sorted him out too. Idiot!...



(Avni: December/1989)

- Heeyyyyy! Moommy, look here!. They've crucified daddy yet again and bringin' him over!

³⁰ Personal communication. 22 August 1995. Istanbul.

Galip Tekin has always been obsessed with the idea that, without any exception, all prophets were the representatives of other civilisations who came to visit our world through the ages. He repeatedly drawn them as astronauts in unsuccessful missions as shown above.

Tekin also attempted to criticise Islam and its practices and was persecuted in a number of occasions. His criticisms were never direct and he employed a number of disguises in his cartoons. In this particular cartoon, the character on the cross is a typical- old enough to be retired with his hand bag and cheap-looking suit and a pair of ever-present glasses- civil servant crucified by a mob. They bring him to his poor-looking house and, in accordance with absurd tradition, would do it again and again. His torture will never end since he is poor (his house is just a simple barrack) and weak that he will be crucified continuously by others who are superior to him.

2.2.1 From Limon to Leman

Leman (started out as *Limon* in 1986) was created as a reaction against *Gırgır* (founded in 1972). But, at this point, before delving into the background of *Limon*, the name *Mikrop* (Microbe-1978) should be mentioned at this point since it was the result of first-ever break-up (or rebellion) among the ranks of *Gırgır* which paved the way to all subsequent separations from *Gırgır*.

Some young and talented cartoonists, such as Engin Ergönültaş (who will later become the editor of another weekly humour magazine called *Pişmiş Kelle* [The Baked Sheep's Head] in the 1990's, İrfan Sayar, Latif Demirci and Hasan Kaçan became disillusioned with *Gırgır* and decided to form a new and different kind of humour magazine.

In retrospect, *Mikrop* should be considered as a magazine that was ahead of its time with its uncompromising attitude towards the establishment and everyday values. The element of sex was always visible and cartoonists did not compromise their values. But, this attitude started to alienate and sometimes disturb the readers, who put the magazine in a place just right next to *Girgir* in terms of sales. It could be claimed that *Limon/Leman* and to some extent *HBR Maymun*, adapted this aggravating underground discourse tried by *Mikrop* to both sexual and politic subjects. The final blow came as a result of discord between the members of the creative team on ideological matters and they all went back to *Girgir*. But their effort to break off from *Girgir* became an example for others who would follow the same path with similar reasons. One of the most widely publicised reasons for the break up that was resulted with the creation of *Limon* was the near-despotic control of Oğuz Aral, *Girgir*'s creator, over his staff.

One of the main concerns of some cartoonists was to create a sense of “togetherness” and to develop themselves artistically. Tuncay Akgün, editor in *Leman*, offers “creative differences” as the major reason for the dispute and subsequent departure from *Girgir*

To tell you the truth, we really wanted to do something different than *Girgir*. A cartoonist is a cartoonist as long as he is constantly creative and this aspect has started to lost in *Girgir*. There were strict rules and limitations in the foundations of *Girgir* and we simply wanted to get out of it.³¹

2.2.2 The Humour Approach of *Limon*

Limon turned the trend of humour that existed in *Girgir* upside down. Its style and approach to the events and people grew more and more radical. *Girgir*'s

³¹ Personal communication. 22 August 1995. Istanbul.

stereotyped clean and honest left-wing politician was crushed since *Limon* was not sympathetic towards any kind of politician.

As a result of some heated discussions among the staff, a group of cartoonists decided to leave *Limon* and started to work in other humour magazines. Due to financial difficulties, remaining staff of *Limon* also started to work in different magazines and for sometime it seemed like everybody was working everywhere. The main core of the creative staff decided to form another 'first' in the history of humour magazines in Turkey. The result of this experiment was named *Deli* (Mad -1991) and it proved that a humour magazine could be published independently and survive without any restriction dictated by the publishing companies.

2.2.3 The Emergence of *Leman*

It was during this time that the creative team at *Limon* decided to vacate premises and form a new magazine. The motivation behind their decision was mainly economical. The staff was not paid for a long time and they were actually trying to survive with the help from their readers.³² For copyright reasons, they could not use the original name and the logo but they found the solution by corrupting original name to *Leman*, a common female proper name, and started a new life as an independent publication without any attachments or restrictions in 1991. Similar to *Diyojen* decades ago, *Limon* also adopted a banner: *Your chronic illness*, since 1986.

³² During this difficult period almost all the staff in *Limon* started to drop small messages in their works that explaining their situation and seriously asking for some help from their readers. The campaign proved to be successful until they decided to leave the magazine for good.

Its cover is literally the most colourful and important page of the whole publication. As Akgün explains

Needless to say our cover of the week always determines the agenda or the agenda dictates us. Usually, I go over all the daily papers with my colleagues until the deadline for the cover arrives. We should decide exactly what we are going to do with the cover by that date. As you've said before, it is quite possible that one could be aware of what's going on in this country or what the others are doing without regularly following any daily paper³³.

Around 1994, *Hıbr* (1989) followed the same path with reasons similar to those in *Limon* and became another independent publication by changing its name to *HBR Maymun* (**H** was for *Haftalık* -weekly-, **B** was for *Bağımsız*-independent- **R** was for *Rahatsız* -irritated- and **Maymun** for *Ape*). For some time, *HBR* was the leader of the humour magazines in terms of sales. During that period, *Leman* was consistent, selling regularly around 40.000 copies. Presently, according to Akgün, *Leman* consistently sells somewhere between 95.000-100.000 copies each week, a figure at least two times more than its closest rival. Akgün also estimates that the actual readership figure is probably much more since, especially at the university cafeterias, school canteens and dormitories, at least 10 or more people read the magazine by way of sharing.³⁴ The present reader portrait of *Leman*, judging from the letters regularly sent to the editor, mostly consists of university students, some marginal groups and workers in general.³⁵ It is also interesting to note that those letters sometimes take up more than a full page in the magazine and have the tendency of turning into a forum between the readers.

In addition to more than forty writers/cartoonists, *Leman* employs some well-known names in contemporary Turkish literature such as the late

³³ Personal communication. 22/08/1995, Istanbul.

³⁴ Personal communication. 22 August 1995, Istanbul.

poet/translator Can Yücel and some popular, new-generation authors like Cezmi Ersöz and Nihat Genç.³⁶

2.2.4 Types and Characters

Among the most consistent cartoonists we could cite, there is Can Barslan with his notorious creation **Hain Evlat Ökkeş** - Ökkeş the Vicious Son- along with a regular, long-lasting and ever- popular full-page titled **Terelelli Pictures** .

Tuncay Akgün and probably his most popular character **Bezgin Bekir-Bekir** the Weary- also became synonymous with eternal relaxation on the couch or anywhere else. Mehmet Çağçağ and the adventures of his popular duo from a posh neighbourhood in Istanbul **Daral & Timsah** –The Stunned Boy and the Alligator-, especially the Alligator who seems to live his life just for its kicks and due to his popularity (or notoriety) the name became synonymous with certain kind of people and behaviour.

A weird creation from Bahadır Baruter and Fatih Solmaz titled **Lombak - Queer**. For their logo, they created a truly alien and funny version of the well-known emblem of Camel cigarettes. In their page, these two humorists deal with almost every imaginable subject by pushing the boundaries of absurd and occasionally tasteless humour.

Other one-man show-type characters in *Leman* include **Kıllanan Adam- Bothered Man-** created by Ahmet Yılmaz deals with a character who unfortunately hears too much too often.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ During my interviews with various members of *Leman* and Mr. Çeviker, I repeatedly asked the reason behind the inclusion of such names into a magazine that was supposed to be a humorous one. I especially found curious the inclusion of, even though he is a talented and popular new generation writer. Cezmi Ersöz because his style and topics were, and still are, predominantly dark and depressive. My conclusion from the answers is that the reader needs some sort of variety and by reading those writers in the magazine he does not have to purchase

Güneri İçoğlu's **Gönül Adamı** -Soulful Fellow- who lives in a world of his own in (post) modern times' Istanbul and trying to save good old values. İçoğlu's other important character is called **Dumur**-The Dumbfounded Man- who is a typical young Turkish intellectual who frequently comes across such events and people in his daily life that leaves him bewildered all the time.

Another creation of this prolific cartoonist is **Firavunun Laneti** -The Curse of the Pharaoh- in which İçoğlu attacks on people who he saw responsible for abrading Turkey's cultural values in the same uncompromising attitude that had led to his imprisonment in the past.

Hamdi Yüzbaşı -Captain Hamdi- a constantly cruel military figure who has recently become a popular cartoon character due to the increase in jokes criticising the army, its structure and the way it operates in recent years.³⁷

Ediz -Shy Boy- as it was mentioned earlier, is an extremely hesitant and shy character depicted as with burning cheeks and sweating all the time.

Marlon (picture 13), by Erdil Yaşaroğlu, is a tongue in cheek satire of the world of mobs by replacing the 'big boss' figure of the 1940's and 1950's in America with a small kid who is a combination of both a ferocious criminal and a mischievous child.

their works separately. As for the contents of those writings, the humour could be many things and bitterness is one of them.

³⁷ *Subay* is the generic term for '(Officer' and *Assubaylar* are 'Junior Officers' from *Asteğmen* to *Yüzbaşı* inclusive. The problem is, most of the ranks within the Turkish army are called by the same name and some ranks in the British Army have no equivalent in Turkish Army such as Commodore, Field Marshal, and Marshal of the R.A.F and Air Commodore. Likewise, the rank *Asteğmen* has no equivalent in British Army. To distinguish between Turkish officers of the Navy, Army and Air Force, the words *Deniz*, *Kara* and *Hava* respectively are put before the name of the Rank, which then takes the 3rd person possessive suffix: e.g., *Hava Yüzbaşı-sı*, 'Flight Lieutenant'; *Deniz Yüzbaşı-sı*, 'Naval Lieutenant'; and in our case, *Kara Yüzbaşı-sı*, 'Army Captain'. But, because it is more than obvious to a male-average cartoon audience to figure out the fact that he is looking at a *Kara Yüzbaşı-sı*, 'Army Captain', since military service is mandatory for every (fit & ready) male adult Turkish citizen and they are already familiar with certain details concerning the military life even before the draft, it is quite unnecessary for the cartoonist to add that specific rank before the name of his character.

Öğreten Adam ve Oğlu (The Man who Teaches & Son) by Kaan Ertem is about an over enthusiastic father who, during their daily excursions in a big city, gives his son never ending advises or descriptions on different kinds of people from all walks of life.

A typical issue of *Leman* also contains a regular column by Feyhan Güver, the only female cartoonist working in *Leman* at the moment. Her creation, **Bayır Gülü** -A Wild Rose - represents women in the countryside, specifically Thrace and its environs. Güver herself also lives in the region and it definitely adds an authentic flavour to her work.

In **Kırık Leblebi** -The Crushed Dry Fried Chick Pea - Suat Özkan deals with elderly people, mostly men who are really old and on their deathbeds, but still maintain a powerful grip on life. Some of them are very old veterans of the War of Independence who are trying to live on their low pensions in retirement houses or with their sons and their unsympathetic spouses. There is not a stand out character in these cartoons since most of the elderly people are identically drawn and very difficult to distinguish from one another.

Similarly in this vein, **Cümbür Cemaat** (All Together) by Ahmet Yılmaz presents, some characters with life spans of few weeks. Yılmaz determines their termination according to the reaction he receives from his friends and readers. The subject matter could be anything. For instance, the characters in one of the most popular adventures consist of two ultra-macho, Mafioso men who accidentally turn to each other at the end of a completely unsuccessful women hunt in a popular summer resort and become lovers. For a long time, this unlikely couple called **Sündüz and Nuri** (their forenames), created such a big following that which simply refused to let them die for a considerably long time.

Dengeli Beslenme -A Balanced Diet - is the title of another half page long section created by Kaan Ertem, who also draws **Öğreten Adam ve Oğlu** (The Man who Teaches & Son). He is probably one of the most active member of *Leman* staff in regards to communicate with his readers on a one-to-one basis. He constantly encourages them to participate by sending him fresh and interesting jokes, cartoons or some rough ideas and always reserves a small space on his page in order to make constructive criticism on those materials. Sometimes he calls or sends messages to them by name checking in speech balloons of his cartoons without bothering with the story itself. He also organised various campaigns and collected signatures for different causes. In one such campaign, he managed to bring a prototype and famous Turkish rock group back together after almost twenty years by convincing them that they were still valid and needed.

A controversial cartoonist, Gökhan Dabak, and his corner **Ziftli Sütlaç**- A Pitchy Pudding - have caused quite a stir among the readers when it was first published because of nature of its material which many readers described in their letters as “disgusting”, “nauseating” or “distasteful”. In those cartoons one could see strange, out-of- this world creatures engaging in very weird movements between themselves or with usual, everyday people undergoing some strange metamorphosis without any apparent reason. Nowadays, his tone is considerably softer compared to his early works but his imagination is still vivid with all those weird word plays and Bosch like figures walking and bubbling around, constantly torturing themselves in every conceivable ways. This background, attitude and humour approach of the cartoonists helped to shape today's *Leman* magazine and set the standards for other humour periodicals.

CHAPTER III

TRANSLATIONS OF THE CARTOONS WITH SPEECH BALLOONS

It would be pertinent to start this section by quoting Wendy Doniger O' Flaherty who decided to translate a book on Sanskrit myths. According to Gutt, O' Flaherty's approach was 'very literal, word-for-word translation, retaining the long, multiple compounds, and bracketing pairs of words to represent the puns and double entendres with which Sanskrit abounds.' As O' Flaherty later explained in her 'On translating Sanskrit myths', she had reasoned that

The people who were likely to read translations of Sanskrit poetry were not the same people who read the sort of novels that one bought in airports; they were people who were genuinely interested in a foreign culture and willing to make a major investment of their intellectual energy in this enterprise.¹

But, as Gutt explains, she was mistaken in her way of thinking by calling upon the reader to do a great deal of work since,

'Anyone who was interested in fighting through that sort of translation would be likely to go ahead and learn the original language; and that people in airports were quite capable of doing that too'. (*T.A.R.*, 182)

As it is clear from these quotations, the idea of getting the receptors to the original as close as possible sometimes could not be a feasible one since people may not be willing to pay the price for it. Being in the same line with Gutt who advises that 'in many cases and especially when addressing a circle or varied audience, the translator will do well to make his intentions explicit' (*T.A.R.*, 183), we will proceed to the translations by following the conditions explained at the end of the previous chapter.

¹ Ernst A. Gutt, *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*, (London: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p.181-3. Hereafter referred as *T.A.R.* in the text

As it was mentioned before, prose humour is somehow a rarity in weekly humour magazines of Turkey. Although there were and still are some talented authors of humour, their works are not presented as much in such magazines as they used to be. It could be said that such sections constitute only ten to twenty percent of a humour magazine today. Accordingly, it would be appropriate to start this section by presenting a recent example of prose humour from *Leman* magazine² concerning the visit of Bill Clinton, the president of the United States of America to Turkey and to attend the meetings of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (AGIT in the text). It is written by Orçun Kunek³ (a pseudonym for the staff member Soner Günday) as a part of his ever-growing collection of absurd song lyrics. A selection from the lyrics he wrote so far is collected and recently published with the title *Oh, Baby!*, a send up to all those rock songs with cliché lyrics. The following piece, although it is fictional, is important to show us the complexity and difficulty of transferring certain cultural aspects even with the adequate support of contextual and cultural backgrounds.

ORÇUN KUNEK

Demirel (Süleyman, The President of Turkey)- Orçun Kunek's new book, *Oh Baby!*, is out. Did you read it, Mr. Clinton?

Clinton- Of course I did.. I bought it as soon as I set my foot in Turkey.

Demirel- Did you like it?

Clinton- Are you kidding? Of course I liked it, but...

Demirel- 'But...' ? Do you mean there are impudences in the book?

Clinton- No, not that. But I just couldn't understand some of the lyrics.

² *Leman*, 419, 20 November 1999, p.17. The original text could be found in the appendix.

Demirel- Is that so? Tell me about it...

Clinton- For instance, I couldn't figure out the meaning in that particular song called " I've tried two to three hours but couldn't explain the meaning of *Zıtt Erenköy* to the Japanese Tourist". I asked about it to the best Turkologists in the US but they failed too...

Demirel- Well, Mr. Clinton, let me say that the key in that song is "*Zıtt Erenköy*" and if you can understand its meaning, the rest will be easy. Do you want me to explain it?

Clinton- I would be much grateful if you do.

Demirel- Do you know the meaning of "*Erenköy*"?

Clinton- No, I don't.. What is it?

Demirel- It's the name of a district. Don't you have such districts in the US?

Clinton- Of course we have... And they're the best districts around.

Demirel- Name one of them...

Clinton- New Jersey.

Demirel- Very well. Now, tell me how can you Americans describe the sound of a car that's going very fast. We, for example, say 'the car went like *vımm*' or ' the guy passed like *zıtt*'...

Clinton- In the US, it depends on the state you're living in.. In some states, it is 'the car went like *kapooowww*' and in others it's ' the guy passed like *wınkımssss*'...

Demirel- Very well. What's your personal choice?

Clinton- I'm from Chicago and we prefer 'it went like *Kapooowww*'.

³ This particular last name, *Kunek* is probably a neologism since there is no such word in monolingual dictionaries in Turkish. Yet the word 'kun' is a slang word for anus and rectum, it is anybody's guess whether the name was created to associate this kind of meaning or not.

Demirel- Good. Now, suppose that you're telling something to someone which also contains some humour. The person you're talking to cannot understand what you're talking about and cannot see the joke as well. At that moment, you just say "*Zuuttt Erenköy*". If it happens in the US, then you'd say "*Kapooowww New Jersey*".

Clinton- Oh, I see. It's a case of coming off best.

Demirel- Exactly. It's the logic of coming off best.

Clinton- *Kapooowww New Jersey*, ha ha haaaa.!... Would it be OK if I say *kapooowww New Jersey* to those who cannot understand the concept of new world order during the CSCE?

Demirel- In my opinion, that wouldn't be necessary. They may get upset and want to start third world war. We don't want to be bothered with that, don't we?

Clinton- Do you think I'm a fool? I wouldn't say it to the presidents of powerful nations but just to the presidents of not that powerful nations.

Demirel- Of course, mate... If you say *kapooowww New Jersey* to Boris Yeltsin, he might be offended. Russia may not be in a good shape economically nowadays but they've still got nuclear weapons. I can't imagine what would happen if he gets sensitive about this matter and drinks too much... He would push the buttons and we'd all kiss our assess goodbye till the kingdom comes.

Clinton- You're certainly right about that. I won't say it to him.

Demirel- Just don't.. Why should you, anyway?

Clinton- My dear Süleyman...

Demirel- Here's my man..

Clinton- Dearest...

Demirel- Let me hug you, man...

For the translation of such texts, apart from providing a basic background information concerning the event and characters, which is basically the same procedure with cartoons with speech balloons, the translator should also try to preserve a certain (comic) tone and maintain the level of comprehensibility of the text for the prospective reader since the material is stripped of the visuals most of the time. Although this particular text is largely free of slang usage, with the exception of '**babafingo**' which was derived from Italian *pappafinco* (a kind of tool in sailing vessels) and used to refer male sex organ and '**kralı**' which is used to express good quality and superiority in someone or something over its counterpart. It is quite possible that the writer used the word 'babafingo' in an allusive way to indicate that President Clinton consulted all the important experts on the subject in his country who were determined (ballsy?) to find out the meaning of 'zıttt Erenköy'.⁴ Since the text in question explains the meaning of it in one way or another, it would be enough to present those parts with a decent translation. Maybe the most problematic part lies in onomatopoeic words in the text. They are used to indicate velocity and high speed and every culture has different expressions to convey such sounds. Instead of recreating those sounds in the text, we did decide to leave them as they were in order to emphasise their unfamiliarity. It was also assumed that the reader would benefit from the actual flow of the text and see the intended joke. Also, in the text names of the places are written in the way they are pronounced to create a certain kind of humour and since it would be very difficult to recreate the same kind of humour by reproducing them, they are presented in their correct forms.

⁴ The district in question, Erenköy, is a well known area in the city of Istanbul and according to humourist Cihan Demirci, who recently published a biography of a long-forgotten humour giant of Turkey, Suavi Süalp, the expression was first created and used by Süalp more than two

since it would be very difficult to recreate the same kind of humour by reproducing them, they are presented in their correct forms.

We would like to start the translations of cartoons with speech balloons with one of the most enduring characters in *Leman*: **Soulful Fellow**.

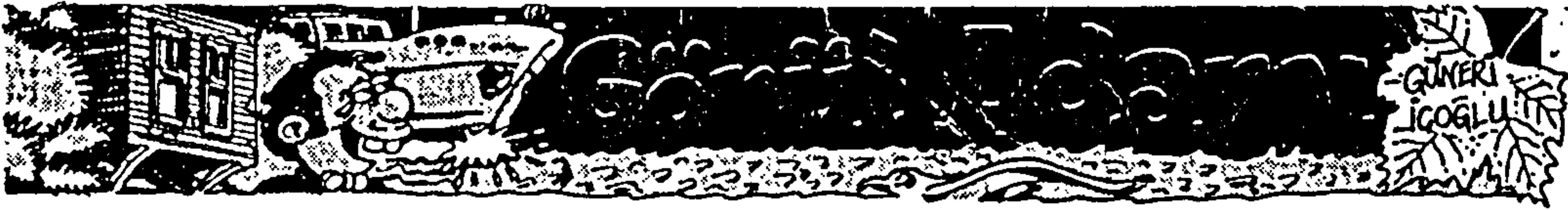
Leman has always been rich for strip cartoons both with regular characters or otherwise since its first incarnation in 1986. In time, along with their increased popularity, the characters' names started to become synonymous with certain behaviours in society and sometimes used as nicknames during everyday conversation between friends. The names of the main characters have primary importance before starting any kind of translation process.

One of such names is *Gönül Adamı* (**Soulful Fellow**). This character, created by Güneri İçoğlu, could be seen as a 'reactionary type' against a cruel and wild world, in his case Istanbul, in a passive way. He is over sensitive and equally helpless against people whose only aim is to make a good bargain and hit the jackpot as much as possible. His only solution was to retreat into a corner, become sort of numb and play or listen to classical Turkish music, which is fast becoming 'out of fashion' just like himself.

Occasionally, we see him with his -seemingly- only friend Jean-Paul, a Frenchman in Istanbul. We are never told about Jean Paul's purpose yet given enough clues to understand that he is educated, intelligent and open to new and exciting experiences in Turkey. **Soulful Fellow** seems to enjoy his company and even *Jean-Paul*'s constant bickering over certain aspects of daily Turkish life does not seem to bother him that much. When they get together they talk and observe

He is always depicted with a teardrop attached to the edge of his right eye although it may change occasionally according to the flow of the story. This tear drop probably symbolising his endless sorrow and hypersensitivity. His main problem is that he is not relevant to this modern age anymore. That does not mean that he rejects every aspect of modern living but just does not want to get involved in it because he has witnessed its damaging aspects most of the time. His character is one of the most representatives of a humour type that started during the early eighties and continued to the present day that makes you laugh with a bitter taste in your mouth.

As for the title, we assumed that there is enough room for an interpretation and took all the background information we could gather into consideration in order to draw an accurate portrait of him. He is usually sorrowful because of the rapid erosion of the traditional values around him but at the same time he gets pleasure when he finds himself in an occasion he could enjoy. His real name, *Yekta*, means 'only', 'unique', 'peerless'. In the Turkish context, **Gönül Adamı** could best be described as a person who prefers spiritual beauty to material magnificence. So the closest adjective we could choose was 'soulful' which can reflect his general state of mind. In the following cartoon, Jean Paul has an assignment but we are not provided the specifics. What is important in this story is that, it implies the importance of a certain amount of cultural background information during a translation which in itself is a cultural transference. Intended as a, like almost all the works in *Leman*, humorous cartoon it attains its target by the help of its graphic nature alongside the writing in the speech bubbles.



AHİR ZAMANLARIN MÜTEMADİYEN YENİLEN KAHRAMANI...



Cartoon 1 (Leman: March/1998)

Frame One:

Jean Paul (hereafter J.P in the text): Monsieur Yekta, I must complete and fax this translation as soon as possible but I can't translate this one word: **rehavet**. Could you please explain it?

Soulful Fellow (hereafter S.F): Of course

Frame Two:

S.F : Firstly, let's go to Hamam and sweat out a bit...

J.P : What..! What do you mean?

Frame Three:

J.P : But.. I don't understand... When are you going to explain that word?

Frame Four:

S.F : First, it is time to get some rubbing..

J.P : Nnnooooo!

Frame Five:

J.P : Aarrghhh! Please let me go..!

Frame Six:

J.P : Oh, my God! I'm wasted.. Can't take no more...

Frame Seven:

S.F : You've seen nothing yet... Now let's treat ourselves to a sumptuous feast..

Frame Eight:

S.F : Baked lamb so delicious.. Fancy a salad to the middle?

J.P : 'to the middle' of what?

Frame Nine:

J.P : Ohh.. I can't understand what's came over me.. I'm feeling quite dizzy.. But I've got work to do.. And you still didn't answer to my question..

S.F : Put that pipe away.. A hookah is what we need now after such a meal.. Don't let yourself go.. Let's go..

Frame Eleven:

J.P : Ohh la la ... Hookah was hard for me.. I'm down.. I just can't stand up.. I've got work to do.. I must fax the translations.. But how am I going to do that... Help me, take me home.. And please explain that word...

Frame Twelve:

S.F : I already did that.. What you feel is 'rehavet'. There's no way you could work after this.. By the way, I'm off to Çengelköy for a cup of tea and chat by the sea.. Then I'll be at home playing some lute and you may join me if you like my friend.

This particular cartoon is crammed with cultural references to the daily life in Turkish society like a visit to the Hamam, ordering a salad to the middle for sharing with the others at the table, a hookah seance. Yet, the translation of the text alone would have been difficult without the aid of graphics and even those who are not familiar with the proceedings in a Hamam (Traditional Turkish Bath) could grasp the reason behind Jean Paul's fear. It is also possible to 'see' and 'feel' the main concept or element of humour which lies in the explanation of the word 'rehavet' which could be translated into English as 'languor' or 'lethargy' yet trying to give the 'feeling' it gains within the Turkish context would require a background and this background could be provided by the graphics.

A similar approach can be observed in other cartoons in *Leman*. The graphics themselves generally support the translation with providing a certain kind of background information by framing the settings, expressing the feelings of

the types and stressing the words used in the speech bubbles. Now, let us consider some other examples taken from the different sections of *Leman*.



Cartoon 2 (*Leman*: 08/1996)

Frame One: Snore..! Ssnnoorree...!Snoorree..!

Frame Two:

Woman: "I've been calling your name in my sleep, Snore..! My husband might get suspicious..!"

Man: "It's quite alright dear! He won't.. Let's go to our love nest..!"

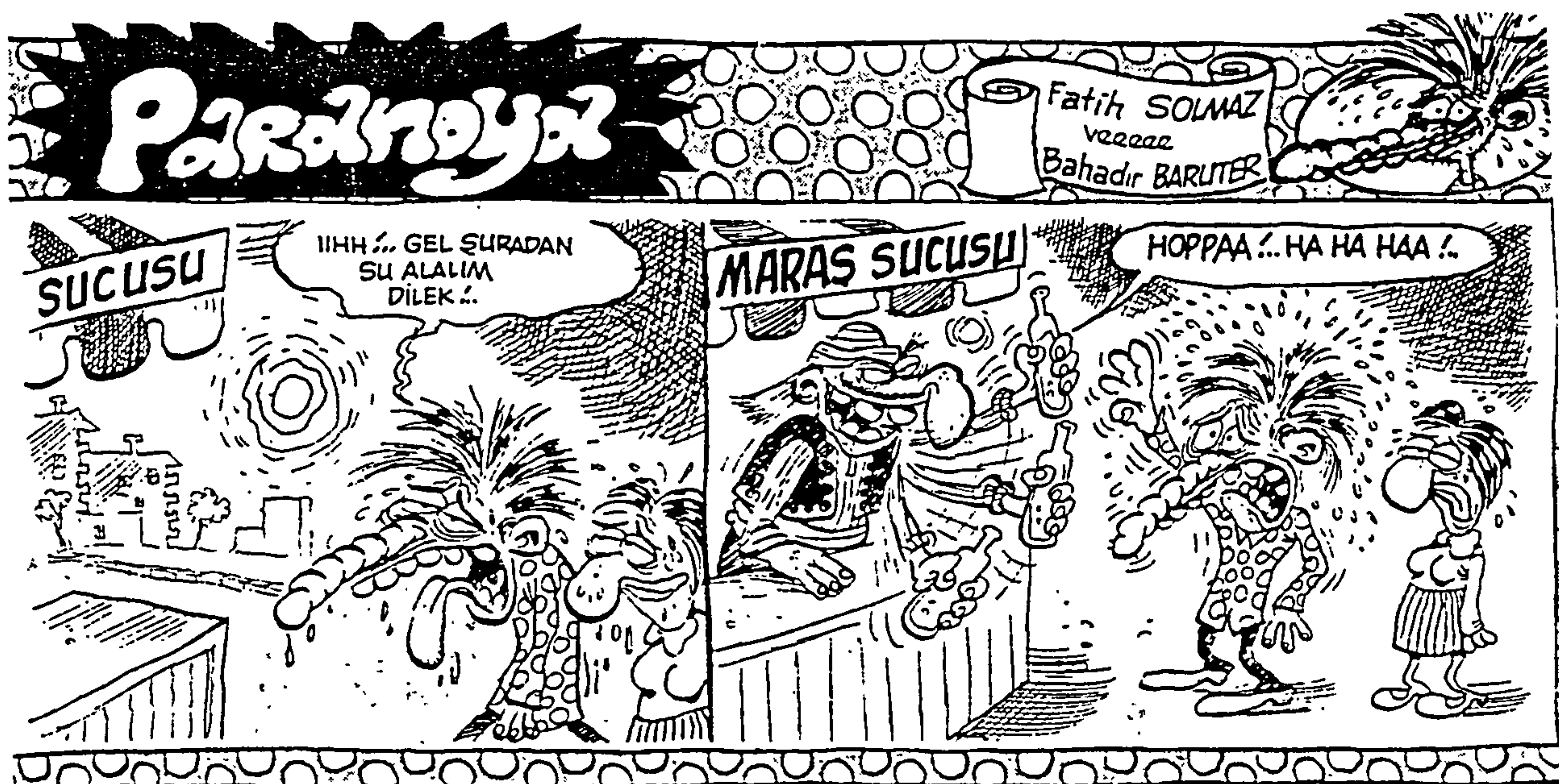


Cartoon 3 (*Leman*: 07/1995)

"Who is this Snore..? Who..? Sob..Sobb!

Above examples have been produced by the same cartoonist team for the same section in *Leman* within the space of two consecutive years, 1994 and 1995. The story line in both cartoons is almost identical, the only exception is the point of view. The translation presents no special linguistic or semantic problems except for the re-production of the onomatopoeia in the cartoons. It is interesting to note that in both cases sound imitations are used as proper names for male and female characters instead of reflecting a sense.

The following cartoons are useful examples showing how necessary background information is for the comprehension of the 'message' intended by the cartoonist(s). Following two cartoons are taken from another regular corner in *Leman* titled **Paranoia** whose main character continuously finds himself in nightmarish situations.



Cartoon 4 (*Leman*: 08/1995)

Frame one:

Paranoid: 'Ohhhh.. Let's have a bottle of water.'

Frame two: (under the banner of *Maraş Waters*)

'Up you go..! Catch it if you can.. Ha Ha Ha!!

The story line is based on a very popular kind of ice cream. It is known by the name of a particular city, Maraş, in southern part Turkey. A typical vendor of *Maraş* ice cream wears a special outfit and usually performs a popular act before passing the cone to his customer. The vendor always manages to pull the cone away from the hand of his customers at the last second and busies himself with good humour for some time and it is a popular act especially in seaside resorts.

In the cartoon above, the paranoid character come across a sadistic vendor who tortures him by using the tactics of a Maraş ice cream seller. It is absurd since

one's chances to come across such a person selling bottled-water are very slim to say the least.

As for the translation, there are no specific language problems in the first frame and the name of the paranoid's girlfriend remains unchanged since her gender is clearly discernible to the reader. In the second frame, it is just a matter of finding an appropriate exclamation remark uttered by the vendor in English since that would show the absurdity of the whole situation. As it is seen in the translation above, the verb 'catch' seems to be the most suitable equivalent in this particular cartoon.



Cartoon 5 (*Leman*: 02/1997)

Nebahat: Fazıl!.. But.. But.. You've told me that you were a doctor!...

Fazıl: Nebahat...! Please.. I can explain...!

The second cartoon above is somehow a follow up to **Paranoia** section, since both cartoons were written and drawn by the same humourists, Bahadır Baruter and Fatih Solmaz. In the fifth cartoon, we see a similar figure, at least

Above is another typical example of that specific humour which is a trademark of *Leman* is presented here with three more cartoons from the same artists and their regular section, *Lombok*. In the following cartoon, we see the interior of a shop, a typical *Bakkal*, an establishment that is roughly equivalent to a corner shop or *Happy Shopper* in Britain. There are two characters in the cartoon: the customer and the owner of the establishment. Their names are not provided since, in most cases, they are not as important or necessary as the names of some stock characters in humour magazines. Though not as absurd as the previous examples, this cartoon attempts to make its point about zoophilism. The success of the translation depends on the recognition of the main character and his all too familiar country background, indicated with some clues such as his thick black moustache, his cheap-looking shirt and overall roughness on his face, would help the reader to make an instant necessary connection and relate to its humour. Once again, the translation bears no significant difficulty either semantically or linguistically. The character is talking in everyday street language, not slang, and every word he uses has its match in English. The picture itself, with the detail of an erect penis pointing towards the sausage, concludes the meaning sufficiently for the audience.



Cartoon 7 (*Leman*: 11/1995)

This cartoon by Çağçağ, deals with this subject of wild capitalism in term's widest usage.

The Boss: 'How could you miss those orders from Central Asia? How could you do this to me? I pay you 3.000 pounds a month!

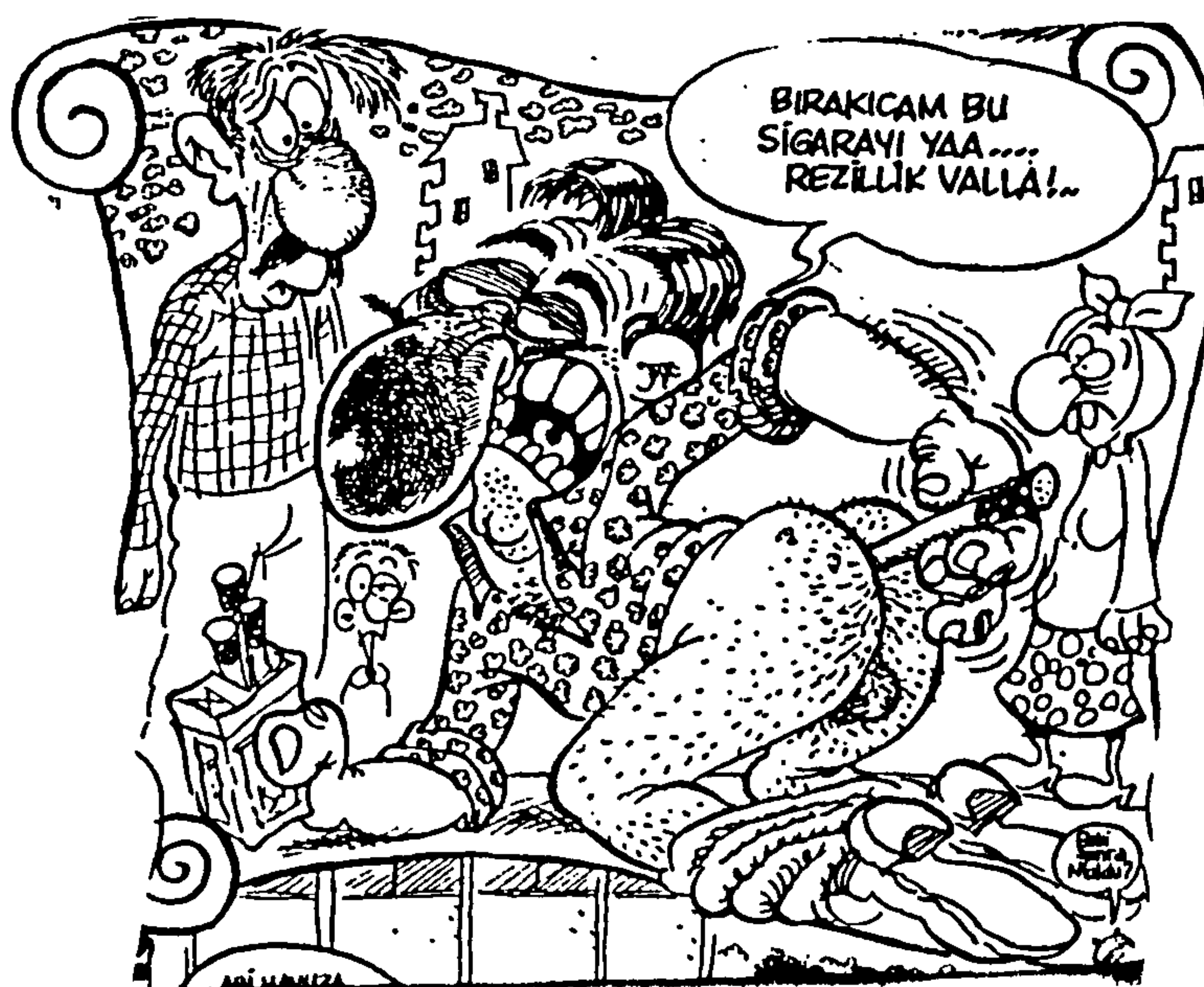
The Employee: 'Noo, Boss.. Ahhhh..! Please..., Don't..

The Employee nr.2: I think this is what they call *Wild Capitalism*. If they can do this to us, I don't want to imagine what they would do to the man on the street..!

The point of view is provided from a different angle and the whole story takes place a single panel. The main translation problem in this cartoon is to decide whether it is necessary to find an equivalent to the accent that the boss uses. His is an indication of someone with a rural background and 'typifies "crudeness". His Turkish is understandable but the traces of his background are apparent in the way he utters the words 'gaçırırısın' (correct pronunciation is 'kaçırırısın' from the verb 'to miss' and 'veriyom' (correct saying is 'veriyorum' from the verb 'to give'). It is evident that, to transfer these words into English and sound them similar as in Turkish would not contribute to its understanding by the target audience since the whole message/meaning could be transmitted by just translating the speech bubbles and the drawing itself would complete the rest. Çağçağ sees them as people who hold the power and comments that they take every kind of precaution to hold onto it as it is seen in this particular cartoon.

In the following cartoon we see another example of absurd humour in the line with *Leman's* traditional underground leanings. Again, along the similar lines with other works in *Lombak*, this particular scene involves no logic at all and intended punch line comes from two directions. The picture itself is the source of

humour. The scene takes place on the street and there are passers by around the central character. The subject matter provides the verbal humour by taking the concept of smoking habit to its extreme by depicting the event explicitly, bordering on the verges of obscenity. Again, the translation presents no significant problems since equivalents in the world level are present in English and semantically there will be no loss of meaning when the text is translated. The talk is delivered in simple and everyday spoken Turkish and all the words have their counterparts in English.



Cartoon 8 (*Leman*: 09/1994)

The Smoker: I'll definitely quit smoking. It's not worth the trouble..!

The next humourist, Metin Üstündağ, apart from his cartoons, also contributes to the prose section of *Leman* magazine. At least half of his total cartoon output includes couples talking or thinking after a seemingly exciting lovemaking. Before some translation examples from this artist, it would be necessary to bring an in-depth investigation into his works of this type by

applying George Steiner's approach to the translation activity. As Steiner observes

Translation is formally and pragmatically implicit in every act of communication, in the emission and reception of each and every mode of meaning, be it in the widest semiotic sense or in more specifically verbal exchanges' and when we read or hear 'any language-statement from the past, be it Leviticus or last year's best-seller, we translate.'⁵

Steiner also evaluates the subject of sex-intercourse and discourse, copula and copulation-as "sub-classes of the dominant fact of communication" since they arise from the life-need of the ego to reach out and comprehend, in the two vital senses of 'understanding' and 'containment', another human being.⁶

Steiner also states that there is evidence that the sexual discharge in male onanism is greater than it is in intercourse and in the highly articulate individual, the current of verbal-psychic energy flows inward. What is more, impotence and speech-blocks, premature emission and stuttering, involuntary ejaculation and the word-river of dreams are phenomena whose interrelations seem to lead back to the central knot of our humanity thus semen, excreta, and words become communicative products.

Another view Steiner puts forward is about the possible and probably crucial difference between the speech of men and women in relation to the interactions of languages. Steiner points out that no man or woman but has felt, during a lifetime, the strong subtle barriers which sexual identity interposes in communication. The semantic contour, the total of expressive means used by men and women differ. But this is when "a human being performs an act of translation,

⁵ George Steiner, *After Babel: aspects of language & translation*, 2nd edition, (Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ.Press, 1992), p.xii and 28.

⁶ Ibid., pp.40-41.

in the full sense of the word, when receiving a speech-message from any other human being".⁷

Üstündağ's regular corner in *Leman* is titled *Pazar Sevişgenleri* (Sunday Lovers) is a collection of cartoons generally dealing with relations between two sexes. The characters in these cartoons usually are ordinary people from different walks of life with some common features like being alienated in a huge city (Istanbul), hesitant to talk to each other or to tell the truth in a moment of crisis. They are individuals with identity crises who are too busy with the minor details of their lives to seize the day. And most importantly, there are couples in their beds during and/or after sex asking questions, thinking and sometimes confessing everything without telling it loud.

But it is during these conversations that these characters, particularly men, tend to lose their long established ties with their 'other self' and became more expressive and talkative towards their partners as a direct result of their climax. As Steiner puts it

Men are deceivers ever who use speech to conceal the true, sexually aggressive function of their lips and tongues. Women know the change in a man's voice, the crowding of cadence, the heightened fluency triggered off by sexual excitement. They also heard, perennially, how a man's speech flattens, how its intonations dull after orgasm. In feminine speech-mythology, man is not only an erotic liar; he is an incorrigible braggart, a self-trumpeter who uses language to cover up his sexual or professional fiascos, his infantile needs, his inability to withstand physical pain.⁸

In the following cartoon, we see a couple in their bed talking. Apart from the usage of slang, the text offers no translation difficulties. The real problem occurs during the translation of man's speech bubble that includes a word play. Üstündağ plays with a popular Turkish saying "ne gam kaldı ne de *kasavet*" which

⁷ Ibid., pp.43.

is used to express one's relaxation from his troubles completely. The translation would still be meaningful if we skip that particular word play, yet, at least within the Turkish context, this is what exactly makes this cartoon funny. Üstündağ presents the reader a funny game by rhyming 'kasavet' (gloom, depression or sadness) with Cassavetes which is actually the last name of the well-known American independent movie director whose style is usually dark, moody and depressive. Yet, the reader should have been aware of Cassavetes' identity and even his style as a movie director, scriptwriter and actor in order to grasp this association that Üstündağ presents in this particular cartoon. The translation therefore could be a tough one if one wishes to keep all the particulars of the cartoon even if that would mean to violate the grammar. In such case, translator would assume that the target audience is already familiar with Cassavetes and leave the name intact but erasing "kasavet".



Cartoon 9 (*Leman*: 04/1995)

⁸ George Steiner, *After Babel: aspects of language & translation*, 2nd edition, (Oxford and New

The Woman: What are you thinkin' my little birdie?

The Man: **YOU!** " What the hell should I think?.. I fucked you and spent.. I don't feel like John Cassavetes at all... Just resting me balls!..

In the following cartoon, there is a similar atmosphere to the previous cartoon. The man is deceiving his partner again and she is not aware of his mood and keeps to see things differently. The man, as in the previous cartoon, is the target of the joke and in a pitiful condition. The language is straightforward and equivalence in English is obtained without any difficulty.



Cartoon 10 (*Leman*: 06/ 1995)

The Woman: Oh, my dear... Tell me something nice.. C'mmonn!..

The Man: Noo.. Nooo... I've got to keep it... I won't come early this time... Noo..
Aahh..

The Bothered Man and The Man who Teaches and his Son

We now will proceed to analyse and translate two of the 'regular' characters in *Leman*. These two characters are *The Bothered Man* created by Ahmet Yılmaz and *The Man who Teaches and his Son*, by Kaan Ertem. Both series are generally presented in single panels with long speech bubbles. Before the translations, there will be a general background and contextual information on the characters and the settings that would help the reader to appreciate the intended message or humour.

As it was explained in the related chapter, the element of humour may change enormously from person to person and culture to culture. This difficult characteristic of humour can also be traced in the following cartoons and as Ertem has tried to explain to his readers in the introduction to his collected works in *A Balanced Diet* (1996), sometimes there is no 'humour' to be seen or felt in these works:

Do not look for humour in my cartoons since the humour might appear spontaneously in them. To tell you the truth, I don't bother to find jokes. For me, the details are far more important than the jokes. I pull that detail from life and put it into a caricature. This detail could be anything from a pair of trousers to a pair of spectacles or from a simple word to the sound of farting or just an expression on somebody's face. For me the whole magic of the caricature is hidden inside these details.⁹

6.2.1. *The Bothered Man*

As one of the most popular characters in *Leman* magazine, *Kıllanan Adam* (**The Bothered Man**) was created by Ahmet Yılmaz. As the main character, he is very much concerned with words rather than action. As in *Öğreten Adam ve Oğlu*, he remains nameless and seems omnipresent. The information related to his background and identity is scarce but it would not be too far fetched to assume that he is probably a pensioner. His wife or any relatives are rarely seen and they

have no names as well. He also has a cat but it rarely makes an appearance. The Bothered Man himself is usually depicted in his underwear sitting by his window and painfully overhearing everything within his surroundings. He is an omnipresent figure who could appear anywhere and anytime. He has a tough facial expression which is complete with permanently raised eyebrows. Another important aspect of his presence is an *ince belli bardak* (a traditional teacup) which is, with the exception of some rare occurrences, always visible on some corner within the frame. The Bothered Man could be evaluated as a moral figure who is both a conservative and liberal at the same time. He tirelessly observes and listens. He always comes across characters and events that make him sensitive and quite tense. He is always a passive observer and listener. He does not interrupt or interfere with the events, which we witness momentarily. Although he is occasionally depicted as someone ready to act but the reader never able to see the end of that particular event. His thoughts and ideas are presented in thought bubbles but he never talks.. These thoughts usually reflect some moral lessons and lead to the same conclusion over and over again. This conclusion is that, it is quite hopeless for Turks to get better in science and reach to the stars. That is because all they do is busying themselves with trivial matters and constantly lying to each other. He talks in colloquial Turkish with a constant tone of anger and complaint. The receiver does not need to be familiar with the idioms used by the characters in this cartoon series since they are caricaturised expertly to reflect their identities. In addition to this visual aid, the necessary background information would also contribute to the appreciation of the intended humour.

During the translation process, it is important to keep and provide a tone that belongs to an individual who is sick and tired of hearing and seeing so many

⁹ Kaan Ertem, *Dengeli Beslenme* (A Balanced Diet). (Istanbul: Leman Publications, 1996)

distressful and disagreeable things. The load of the target audience would be lightened by the existence of the background information provided above and also by the ever-present portraits of the characters on whom the events are based. Their names are left unchanged since the audience would be aware of the fact that they are dealing with a foreign and distant culture. It would also be pointless to transfer some Turkish proper names such as Neşet, Bahri or Turgut as Nash, Bill or Trevor.

As in *The Man Who Teaches and his Son* serial cartoons, the reader finds the opportunity to see people from many different cultural backgrounds. But, maybe inevitably, the main target of the Bothered Man is people in the cities or more specifically Istanbul although this is not that apparent in many parts.

The recent phenomenon of the foreign language courses in Turkey has also found their representations in various cartoons.



(Cartoon 11: *Kullanılan Adam*/1997, hereafter referred as K.A)

Zeynep: No way, Richard! How can I take it easy! It happened before.. Not only him but Mr. Nurettin does it too! Last night, it was around 9 p.m. and I was about to go to bed, guess what happened? He called me up and said he only wanted to hear my voice..! Can you imagine that!.. It was nine o'clock and he rang me up!..

The Bothered Man: So, that's the name of the game, isn't it? "Let's show him that I'm perfectly aware of that unwritten rule in England that you shouldn't call anyone up after nine o'clock at nights and maybe I'll cheat him into a marriage and go to Britain!.." But this was not exactly the reason your father sent you to *English as Your Second Tongue* course. Beware!.. These people can slip their tongues into you know where and you'll never know it!.. By the way, I've become completely bald, dammit..!

This particular cartoon attempts to criticise people, especially young ladies, who want to meet someone of foreign nationality, preferably British or American, get engaged and leave the country as soon as possible. Such language courses with their foreign, single and male staff fast became hunting grounds for such people. *The Bothered Man* criticises this kind of behaviour and finds it. In the cartoon, the Briton is left speaking in English, probably based on the broad assumption that an average *Leman* reader should recognise those words in today's world under the dominance of English language. The main translation problem occurs when we attempt to translate/recreate the bitter irony presented by *The Bothered Man*. He "warns" the girl by making an analogy between the ordinary name of the course, the language and its more common usage. The word in question is *dil* (the tongue) which also means *language* in Turkish. On the other hand, *The Bothered Man* is referring to the slang usage of the word generally associated with the act of cunnilingus and therefore creates the element of humour by implying that there could be dangers awaiting a young girl in with such ambitions. This explanation makes a change in the name of the institution, *DILKO*, inevitable if I want to preserve at least the meaning (italics added).

The following cartoon is also about the foreign language problems in Turkey but takes place on a more street level.



Cartoon 12 (K.A)

Mr. Gürcan: Yes, yes Mr. Tobishi... I'll shag your mom like a rattlesnake!..

The Bothered Man: I'll never understand why my fellow country men who don't care to learn a foreign language treating a foreigner like this!.. "Shag like a rattlesnake!" I'll see your rattlesnake after paying all those restaurant bills today! Yet... That Japanese fellow is also a bit show-off or what?

As usual, *The Bothered Man* overhears a conversation between two businessmen strolling along the Bosphorous in Istanbul. The Japanese businessman, Mr. Tobishi, cannot speak Turkish, and the Turkish businessman, Mr. Gürcan, cannot speak Japanese so they both use English as their common language. The problem here is that, the Turkish businessman does not care about his ability to speak English. He is just there to act as a guide for Mr. Tobishi during his stay in Istanbul and does not care for the rest. He has no apparent reason to curse and talk to Mr. Tobishi in the way he does. The Bothered Man does not approve his behaviour and criticise him rather harshly. As with the previous example, the usage of slang plays an important role in this cartoon. Mr. Gürcan utters the word '*kübra*' when he refers to Mr. Tobishi's mother implying

anal sexual intercourse. Aktunç's extensive *Turkish Slang Dictionary* does not include this word and the word's standard meaning is given in monolingual dictionaries as 'major' and a 'major premise' within the parameters of logic.¹⁰ There is no similar curse and slang word in English language according to Jonathon Green's thesaurus¹¹ and it leaves only one option for the translator: to create an equally 'meaningful' profanity.

Other selected cartoons and translations of The Bothered Man



Cartoon 13 (K.A)

Girl on the left: Jimi Hendrix put a gun into his mouth and pulled the trigger.

That's the way it happened!..

The Other Girl: You stupid cow..! That was Kurt Cobain.. Hendrix choked on his own vomit.. You don't know a shit..! Listen and learn, O.K?

The Bothered Man: I just don't get it.. What's the use of knowing such garbage?

You don't know how to cook stuffed pepper or stewed eggplant yet know every

¹⁰ Hulki Aktunç. *Büyük Argo Sözlüğü* (Turkish Slang Dictionary). (Istanbul: Afa Publications, 1990) and A. Vahid Moran. *Büyük Türkçe-İngilizce Sözlük* (A Turkish-English Dictionary), (Istanbul: Adam Publications. 1985).

¹¹ Jonathon Green. *The Slang Thesaurus*, (London: Penguin Books, 1988)

stupid detail on those people. Who would give a toss if it were Kurt or Burt? I just wonder how we can conquer the moon while you waste your life on a piece of crap...!

Especially the word play on "Yok Kurt, Yok Kuzu" needs an effort since the proper name Kurt (in the cartoon it refers to the leader of a famous rock group Kurt Cobain who committed suicide in 1993) means 'wolf' in Turkish and The Bothered Man plays with it by rhyming Kuzu 'the lamb'. It is not possible to create the same effect in English so we opted for rhyming it with an another proper name, Burt, in order to obtain the sense of insignificance of such things implied by the Bothered Man.

The following cartoon depicts the anger of the Bothered Man against those who are no good for even themselves. These people would do anything for some money regardless of its source and a society, which is crammed with such people, can never advance in science and technology.



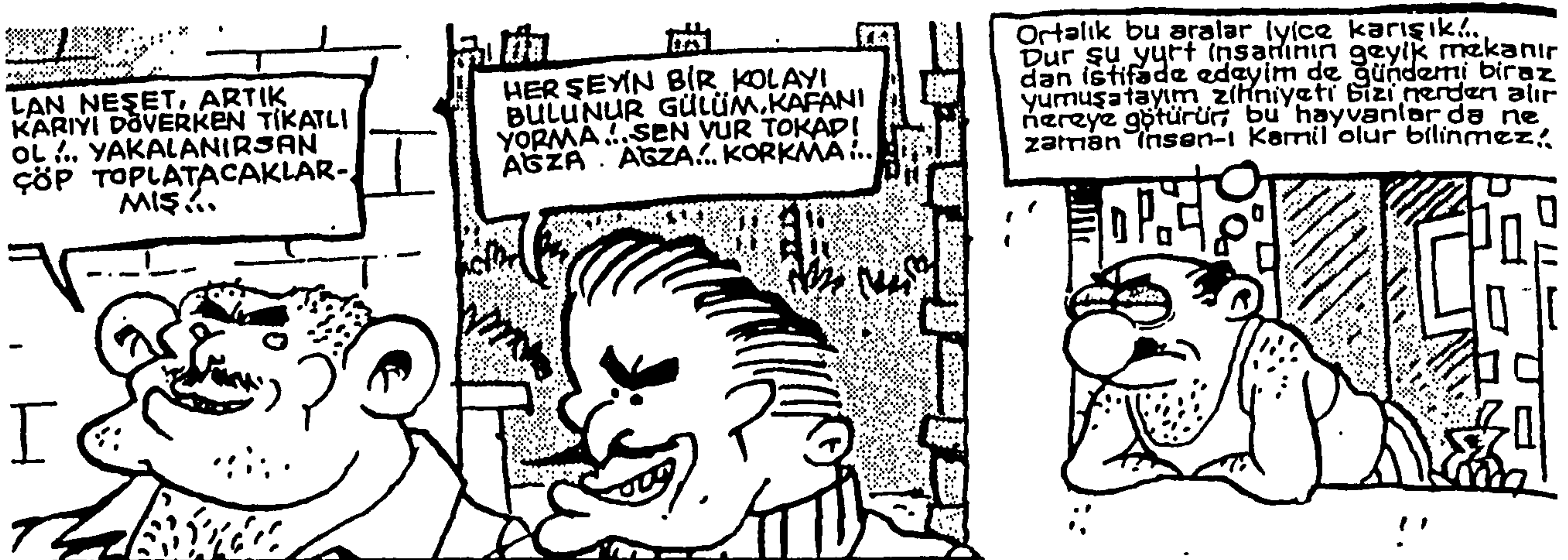
Cartoon 14

Man on the left: Tell me the truth Bahri..! Would you pick up the soap for 10.000 quid?

Man on the right: You call 10.000 quid something? Yet, I would say O.K to a handsome bloke, someone who would take care of me for the rest of my life!

The Bothered Man: You abominable creatures..! Who would give a penny for your shitty arse? Repent at once. I always knew how far my countrymen would go for some easy money, but I would never have guessed **this..!**

The main problem in this cartoon is the use of slang uttered by the character on the far-left side. He asks his mate if he would volunteer sodomy- he actually uses the verb 'to fuck'- with a perfect stranger for a good amount of money. The word he uses, 'kase' (literally means a bowl) is one of the many substitutes in Turkish for arse. We have opted for "picking up the soap " since it is the most suitable slang usage that could both reflect the sodomy with willingness and the word 'kase'.



Cartoon 15

Man on the left: Yo, Neşet..! Have you heard the news? You better be careful when you smack your bitch up... If they get you, they make you collect the rubbish on the streets!

Man on the right: There's always a way out, mate..! Don't bother y'self with these things..! Go on, hit her right on the mouht, don't worry!

The Bothered Man: It's been hectic nowadays and I just wanted to benefit from the talk radio Turkey and calm down a bit but I'm not sure where this approach would take me at the end...Meanwhile, I wonder just when those animals would start behaving as civilised human beings..!

Created during the preparations for a new law to prevent domestic violence and protect women was underway, this cartoon reflects the other side of the coin and predicts that nothing will be gained from this new law and the situation will remain the same for women. During the translation, the specific, matey expressions in Turkish such as "gülüm", "lan" are replaced with their closest equivalents. The accent on "tikatli" (dikkatli/careful) and "ağza" (ağzına/on the mouth) are given in their distorted English forms but keeping their intended pronunciations close to their correct forms. For "geyik mekanı", the 'Talk Radio Turkey' was preferred because it is not simple, typical a small talk but a kind of very loose talk which would be on any topic with the involvement of a large group of people. It does not follow a predetermined route and could continue for a long time without any interruption. This kind of talk is very much reminiscent of the format recently introduced to the U.K by Talk Radio. Although there is no such station operating in Turkey, the overall mentality is the same.



Man on the left: Blimey! Why don't you wake up early? We've already missed the breakfast for two days in a row..!

Man on the right: Hell with the breakfast, mate..! As long as you're alright, hell with the rest.. We'll wipe out the open buffet in the evening, take my word for it...

The Bothered Man: I don't want to think about the prospects of going to the Moon with such people who hit the deck before anyone else and waiting for the breakfast time like a hungry wolf to abuse the open buffet system in holiday villages. This is the last time I'll bother myself on this subject or... anyway..!

In this cartoon, the Bothered Man criticises the mentality of those who are constantly going after small interests and wasting their potential away. The dialogue between two friends is filled with slang words that make the translation considerably difficult. The best possible way rendering such sentences into English would be to keep the meaning intact and reflect the mood by choosing equally effective slang equivalents. For example, "karga bokunu yemedem" is used for those who get up very early in the morning and "to hit the deck" seems to be the best possible alternative for explaining the meaning in English. Likewise, as in "açık büfenin ..mına koruz", the expression is highly offensive and self-censored in the cartoon.¹² Although there are no shortages of similar expressions in English language and even though they do not represent the level of obscenity in the Turkish expression, either "wipe out" or "clean out" would make the meaning more understandable since this is what those men are planning to do.

¹² Although there are no certain rules for using foul language and obscenity in the press, especially in humour magazines, many expressions or curses containing such words are self censored by omitting or changing certain letters.

The Man who Teaches and his Son: a background

Öğreten Adam ve Oğlu (The Man who Teaches and his Son) made its debut in 1992.¹³ Its creator Kaan Ertem started with a one-off caricature that included a man and a little boy, apparently a father and his son, in a street scene. The father was trying to explain something to his son by saying 'Look at that son...' before plunging into a lengthy and detailed explanation of the situation and/or character(s). His narration was detailed because its creator, Ertem, was and still is, deeply interested in details of everyday life.

In general, the father wishes to pass some 'useful' and 'practical' information to his son is a typical example of new generation, who grew up during the turbulent years of the late and controversial prime minister Turgut Özal. Those years, starting with the 1983 general elections that were held after the military take-over of 1980, would be considered as transitory times for Turkey both in economic and cultural sense. This new generation was obviously influenced by the new values and the notion of global information age. Due to this kind of background, the young lad usually pays no attention at all to the things his father is constantly mentions. For him, all the information his father brings up is mostly worthless and useless details on assorted people and events in daily life.

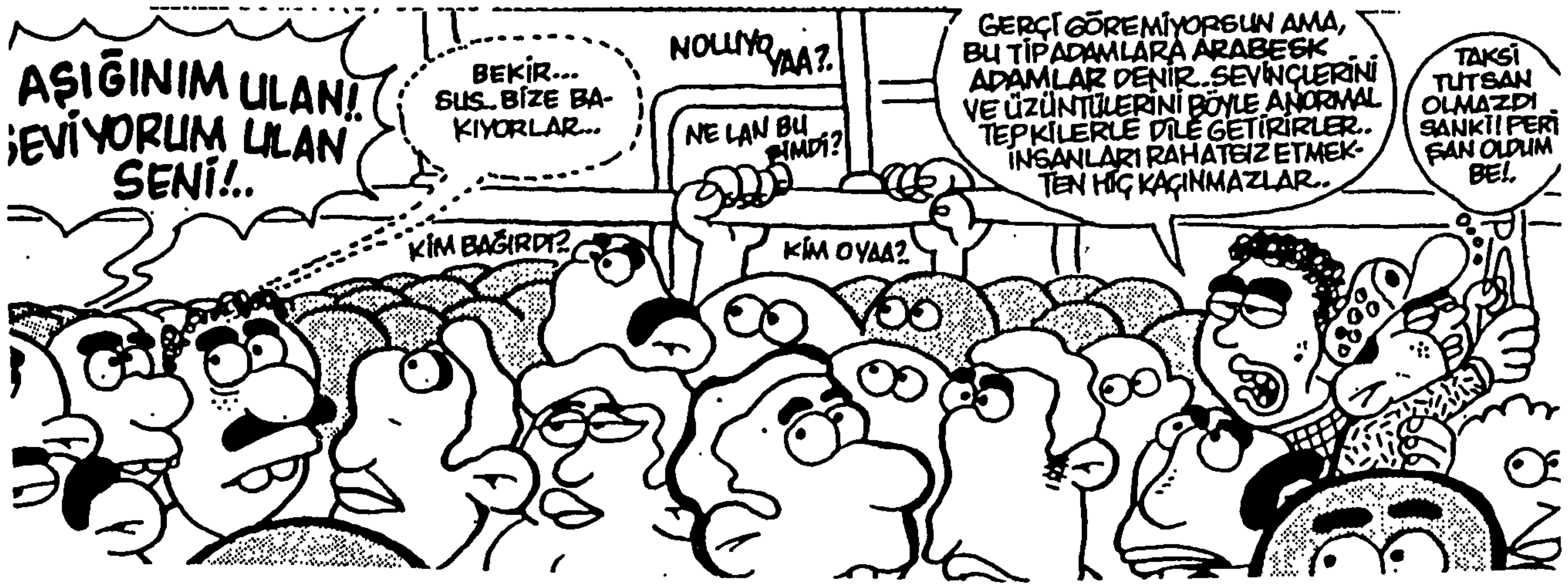
Similar to **the Bothered Man**, the father and his son could appear anytime and anywhere. His father thinks that the truth is hidden not in the play stations, television or in the shopping centres but in small details. He really tries hard to give some necessary and general information on life, people, relations

between people, different kinds of people roaming the streets but his son's reaction is nothing but sheer boredom. When his father takes him to the police station to show some famous people busted at a drug party and tells him not to become someone like them when he grows up, his only reaction was to think 'Oh, why don't we just fuck off!' in his thought bubble.

This kind of education employed by the father, according to Ertem, is based on a system called 'natural education', which is described as the total opposite of the organised education. Natural education is not based on a plan and schedule. It takes place in life, it is spontaneous and coincidental and during the education one learns from friends, family members and so on. The father sees the issue of education as the most important problem in Turkey and he refuses to send his son to the university and prefers natural education.

The father talks proper Turkish without employing slang or colloquial words. In many cases, his definitions/descriptions of certain people are given in bold type. These compact definitions are given in father's speech bubble and this fact makes this part of the translation a relatively easy task. The son's thought bubble, the son never talks aloud but always thinks, could also be considered as trouble free in regards to translation since they are always much shorter than the father's bubble and the tone is always the same. The translation problem comes with the speech bubbles belonging to the character(s) who are presented as the main source(s) of the intended humour in the panel.

¹³ Kaan Ertem, *Öğreten Adam ve Oğlu*, (Istanbul: Leman Yayıncılık, 1997), p.5 and Metin Hakyeri, 'Mizah Devlerinden Şok Açıklamalar' Shocking Revelations from the Giants of Humour, *Cumhuriyet* 10 December 1995, p.7.



Cartoon 17

Speech bubble on the far left: 'I said I love you!.. Understand? I lovve yoouu!

Speech bubble next to it: 'Bekir, please!.. People looking at us!..

Other Voices: 'Who's shouting?'

'What's goin' on here!..'

'Who was that..?'

The Man who Teaches: Even though you cannot see him, he is one of those whom I call the **Arabesque Men..!** Such people express their emotions like this in public and don't give a damn about the discomfort they give to others.

The Son: 'Why didn't we take a taxi? I'm wasted here!..

The information about arabesque and its culture was given before in the section on Turkish humour. The exclamation of "ulan" presents a complex problem of translation. It is maybe the most popular interjections in Turkish language yet at the same time very difficult to explain. It could be used as an expression of many situations and more importantly, feelings such as annoyance, anger, hate, love, affection and friendship. It's more commonly used when addressing to someone with not so good qualities: you (wretched fellow!). It is also often used in a humorous way when you are annoyed with someone or it literally means an evil person. As it is clear from these explanations, the best

possible way to transfer this word is to adapt it according to the context in which it operates. In the cartoon above, the speaker uses "ulan" to express and stress his affection for his lover and therefore it would be suitable to translate it as

"understand?" to maintain the same feeling.



Cartoon 18

Speech bubble on the far left: 'You're dead meat!.. Did you hear it ? I'll mess you up!..

Speech bubble next to it: Necmi!.. C'mon mate!.. Everyone's looking at us...Cut it out!.. That's enough. You've beat them all right!.. Why don't you listen to me, man?

The Man who Teaches: 'Look here son!.. People like this man are called ' **Those Who Don't Want to Become a Laughingstock!**'.. They immediately step in whenever a brawl breaks up and try to make their friends calm...They are usually mild-mannered people who play cards in their local coffee-houses!..'

The Son: 'What's he talkin' about? Details and more details...Can the readers understand this?

In this cartoon, the noun "abi", short for ağabey/big brother, is repeated for five times by the man who does not wish to become a laughingstock. This kind

of usage is very popular in spoken Turkish and, as with the application of "ulan" above, it could be uttered for the expression of different emotions. In the cartoon above, it is used in place of respect, uneasiness, and anxiety.



Cartoon 19

The Father: Demeet!.. Fresh up my tea, won't you? I've calling you for two hours..

C'mon, hurry up!..

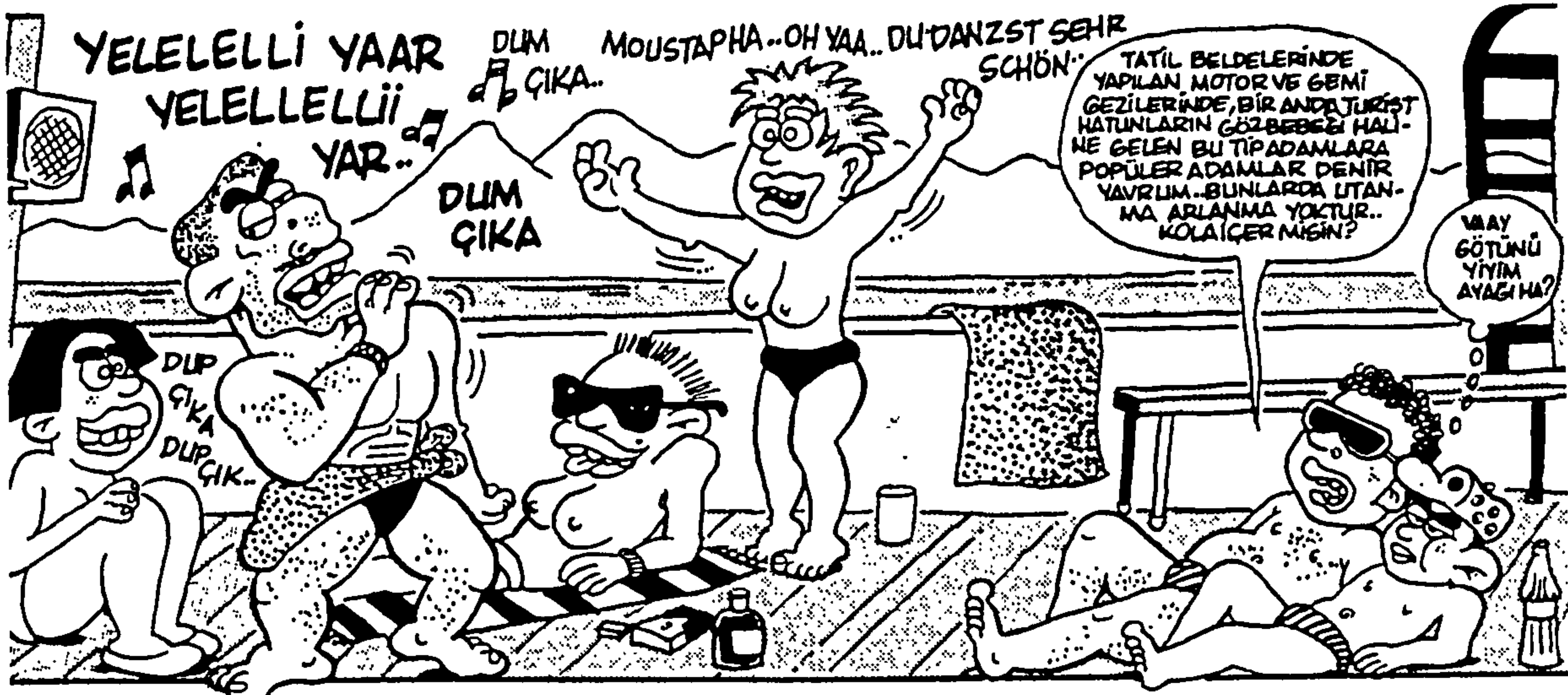
Demet: All right dad... It's on its way!..

The Man who Teaches: Look son, these kind of people are called **Men of Serenity**... They have never been stressed in their lives and therefore they never constipate. You could see plenty of them around holiday resorts...

The Son: Damn!.. I look like an Arab's bollocks from tanning!..

This cartoon is an example for the Man who Teaches' excursion into other people's private lives. One of the two major problems in English translation is the description of the main character: A man of serenity. The word serenity was chosen because it was the best alternative to reflect the character's overall easy-going nature. An adjective like "happy as a pig in shit" would only reflect one side of this character since his situation is a combination of good temper, calmness and tolerance.

Other problem is to find a suitable equivalent for "manda keyfi" which the man who teaches uses to describe the main aspect of Man of Serenity. It literally means 'the pleasure of the buffalo' and it is commonly used to describe people with an unlimited ease or tranquillity. The word 'stress' in the translation is used to describe the result of this limitless tranquillity.



The Man who Teaches: Look son, these kind of men is called **Popular Men**. They suddenly become very popular among the female tourists in and around holiday resorts as well as on boat cruises like this one and, as you can see, they have no sense of shame... By the way, fancy a Coke?

The Son: Hey... You're polishing apples, aren't you?

This particular cartoon is among the most problematic presented in this chapter since to find an equivalence for the onomatopoeic words and lyrics used in the background music to which the **Popular Man** dances. It is called "göbek havası" which is equal to perform belly dance that is believed to have Arabic origins. The sound effects "dum çıka and dup çıka" are the onomatopoeic words for the sound of repeated beat which bass and cymbals provides as the main rhythm. Those two words "yelelelli yar" are the main signifiers of the song's

Arabic roots. To choose "boomm boomm" for the bass sound may cause the reader to associate it with familiar beat of disco or techno music. To erase those onomatopoeic words seems to be the best idea for one main reason. Their absence would not cause any lack of meaning in translation since the reader will obviously observe that there is a loud speaker on the left hand side and there are 'notes' literally flying in the air and around the **Popular Man**. He was depicted as showing (off) some dance figures and keeping a beat, which would indicate that the reader is dealing with some people who are enjoying themselves. It is not vital for the prospective reader to know whether he is dancing to a traditional or foreign tune since the joke is lying in the way he is depicted and Öğreten Adam's harsh criticism. It would be useless to change it with a popular and well-known English tune since it will corrupt the cultural relationship between two cultures and alienate the reader. For similar reasons, we have also opted to retain the words uttered in German since it has a supplementary function and reflects the unfamiliarity of the setting. It was not important for the cartoonist to include such words in a foreign language for his Turkish audience regardless of their sufficiency in foreign languages. It is just an addition to show the reader that the Popular Man is in his usual surroundings and he is only popular (or attractive, if we pay attention to that particular topless lady with sun glasses who is licking her lips) for those foreign tourist.

One other translation problem lies in the reply of Öğreten Adam's son. He regards his father's offer for a can of coke as an act of bribe. It is possible to assume that Öğreten Adam is aware the fact that, since his constant efforts to teach something to his son in anytime and anywhere causes an apparent displeasure, he should compensate it occasionally. But the expression "götünü

“yiyim ayağı ha?” is a strong one because it includes a sense of degradation. Usually employed to describe someone who is an ‘arse-kisser/ licker’, its usage in this context would be questionable. One of the best equivalents to express the meaning in boy’s reply would be ‘apple polisher’ since it could also reflect a sense of ‘kidding’ as well as anger and degrading.

VARIOUS CARTOONS FROM CONTEMPORARY TURKISH HUMOUR MAGAZINES AND THEIR TRANSLATIONS

In this section, a wide variety of cartoons from various contemporary and popular Turkish humour weeklies will shortly be analysed and translated in order to provide a more detailed view and opinion on contemporary Turkish graphic humour. The material in question was mainly culled from *Gırgır*, *H.B.R*, *Maymun*, *Pişmiş Kelle*, *Avni* (a follow up to *Gırgır*) and *Leman*. The themes in these cartoons cover a wide spectrum, ranging from gender issues to casual relationships on the street, from absurd existences to isolation and madness. As in accordance with Newmark’s suggestion, the background and contextual information, if any, will be obtained unobtrusively and briefly.¹⁴ The following examples are presented in a non-chronological order.

¹⁴ Peter Newmark. *Approaches to Translation*. (London: Prentice Hall, 1988), p.77..



Cartoon 21

(*Gırgır*: 18/January/1987)

- "Hold on a second, Hatice... Don't break my concentration!..."

A typical example on gender issues taken from *Gırgır*. The male is portrayed as a rude, impolite individual. His partner, a typical housewife, accompanies him. She seems confused since she does not understand why her husband finds nose picking as something important. Other visual clues, which would help the native audience to see the social background of this couple, are present but not necessary for the target culture. As for the translation, linguistically every word has its equivalent except the name of the woman. "Hatçe" is a provincial pronunciation of "Hatice" and proper written form is preferred in translation for the sake of clarity.



Cartoon 22

(HBR *Maymun*: 12/January/1991

- "Ahem... Excuse me master... I'd like to have a divorce.. With your permission, of course!"

In this cartoon, the usage of the noun "bey" could be tricky. It could be used instead of 'husband' or 'spouse' in modern Turkish but usually by women with traditional or rural backgrounds. The suffix "im" changes this noun into another common usage of "beyim" (my master) and makes it more powerful. In this sense, it could be an indicator of certain characters with predicted responses and/or reactions and with weak personalities. In the cartoon, this kind of character is trying to break her mould but whether she is going to be successful or not remains to be seen.



Cartoon 23

(*Avni*: 17/March/1980)

DEADLY DIALOGUES

The Dummy: Master, I need a haircut. Let's go to the opera!

The Puppeteer: Eh? What do you mean, dummy!

The Dummy: I mean the Barber of Seville, master!!!

This cartoon is a typical example for the usage of absurd. While it lasted, the cartoonist Birol Bayram applied all possible word plays on those characters. The translation bears one difficult problem. The interjection "höt" is a vulgar one and roughly means 'boo!' or beware. It is generally used to interrupt someone rudely. Yet, in this particular cartoon, it is used in a affectionate way and the everyday English interjection of "eh" would be enough.



Cartoon 24

(*Avni*: 16/April/1981)

Little Boy: "- Sir, I'm taken to you at once... Can I call you 'dad'?"

The Man: "Oh my god! This is him! The lost boy of Turkish movies!"

This cartoon especially requires a certain amount of cultural information and even a native speaker might find it difficult to understand the intended joke. During a certain period of Turkish cinema, a reoccurring theme was the relation between father and his son who have not seen each other for a long time. Usually, the father was sure of the fact that that little boy was his son but for some reason he could not explain the truth. On the other hand, his son was also feeling himself a bit odd when he encounters with this perfect stranger for the first time and utters those words above. If one is not interested in such movies and does not possess this kind of background, the joke would be meaningless for him. The translation is almost trouble free except one thing: a common form of addressing in Turkish is to call someone who is older than you as "teyze/aunt" or "amca/uncle" even though they are not your family members and it is received as a sign of sincerity. The best alternative was to use "Sir" and alter the tone to a more serious one.



Cartoon 25

(Avni: 23/June/1989)

First frame, from left to right:

- I enjoy adventure... There should be lots of guns and bloodshed...
- Sex and intrigue are a must...
- I always look for lies, deception, trickery and hatred...

- A certain amount of tension and exploitation are necessary for me...
- Especially some social commentary...

Second frame, from left to right:

On the TV screen: NEWS

- At last! It was about time...
- I like this programme. Everything I need is in it...
- God... This one is my favourite.. Quick, give me a chair....

In this cartoon, we see a satire of news programmes and television in general. Although it takes place in a coffee- house, the setting is similar to a pub in Britain therefore familiar to the prospective reader. The subject matter may also be familiar to a British reader whose country is also very much television oriented. The original text is in everyday language and all the expressions have their equivalents in English.

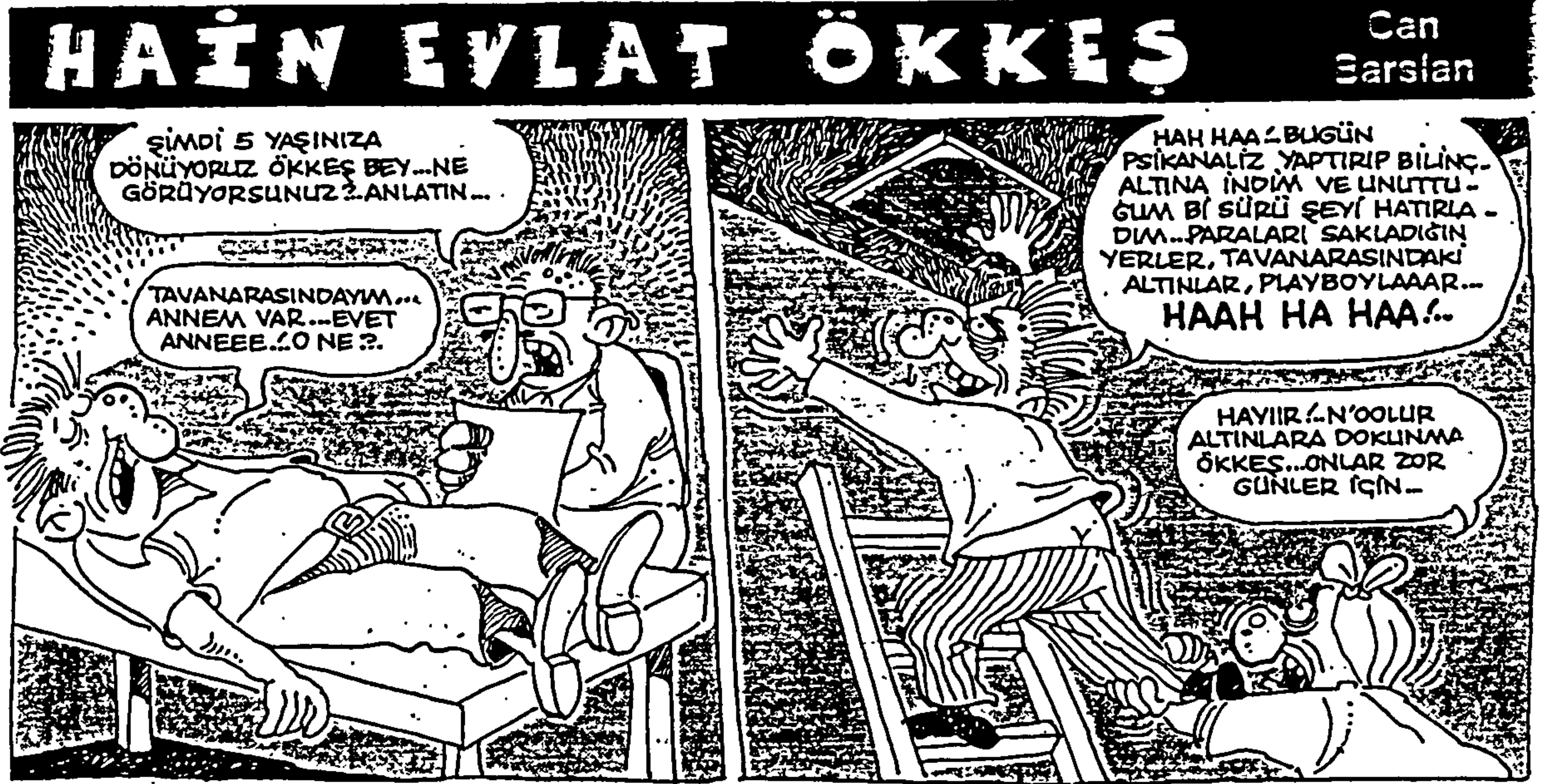


Cartoon 26

(*Pişmiş Kelle*: 06/October/1998)

- No way! I'll be promoted first!
- In your dreams! It's my turn, you traitor!
- I think this is what they call 'star wars'...

This particular cartoon does not require any background or contextual information because the graphic itself could describe the situation adequately. Although, the uniforms would seem alien to the foreign reader, it would not hide the fact that the joke is concerning the military. To see the joke, the reader should be aware of the movie called 'Star Wars'. Translation wise, this cartoon presents no difficulty to the translator linguistically or semantically.



Cartoon 27

(Leman: 24 April 1999)

First frame:

- The psychoanalyst: "- Now you'll go back in time to when you're 5 years old..

Please tell me what do you see, Mr. Ökkeş.."

- Ökkeş: " I'm in the attic... There's my mother.. Yes, my mother.. But.. What's that?"

Second frame:

- Ökkeş: -"Hahahaha... Today I went to a psychoanalyst and in my subconscious I remembered the things that I've forgotten... All those places you hid your dough, gold and my Playboy magazines...

HAHAHHAAAAA!!!!...."

- Mother: - "Nnnooooo!!!! Please don't take them Ökkeş!.. I keep them for the hard times.."

This cartoon is a recent example from one of the most enduring series in *Leman* by Can Barslan, *Hain Evlat Ökkeş* (Ökkeş, The Vicious Son). This character and his deeds have caused so much furore among the readers in the past but, unfortunately, when they realised that real life was far worse than they would ever guess, the reaction diminished. Ökkeş is a dangerous criminal who is always after his mother and grandmother's money. He plays many tricks to find some money that they have hidden in some corner for difficult times and when he finds it he just spends it on women, drugs and games. He beats them continuously and sadistically for every possible reason one could imagine and has no regrets. He even forces them to prostitution or to hide the corpses of men he had murdered. In the cartoon above, we see one of his plans to cheat his mother. For the translation, the only problem was to decide whether to keep the name Ökkeş intact or not. It will remain untranslated because, as explained by Newmark, this particular name, even though it is a common enough proper name especially in provinces, has long established itself as a 'brand name' like some other *Leman* characters such as *Kıllanan Adam*, *Timsah* and *Bezgin Bekir* in source culture and 'these must not be translated unless they have become eponyms and are used generically'.¹⁵

The following three cartoons are typical of those scatological humour which are regularly published in various magazines. The third cartoon presents a translation problem in relation to a specific cultural detail.



Cartoon 28

(Mikrop: 01/03/1979)

Man on the left: Hey, what are you doin' man? You can't *fill* university application forms like this!

Man on the right: What else I'm supposed to do? I've tried everythin' for six years and nothin' happened. This time I'm goin' to *fill* it like this!

In this cartoon, there is a word play between the act of filling a form and act of defecation. Both acts could be expressed by the same word in spoken Turkish and the translation bears no difficulty because the actual graphic could compensate any possible loss of meaning. Only addition is the italicisation of the word 'fill' in the dialogue to direct the reader's attention to this particular and most important word in the joke.

¹⁵ Peter Newmark. *Approaches to Translation*. (London: Prentice Hall, 1988), p.72.



Cartoon 29

(HBR Maymun: 23/01/1997)

Woman: Look Cengiz, our relationship...

Man: If you ever leave me, I'll shit on your carpet Tuğçe,! And, for your information, my waste smells very bad, it's disgusting and very dense. Please don't make me do it my love!.. I love you!..

Although this cartoon is mainly about the relations between sexes, it distinguishes itself with its scatological approach. Translation is relatively easy from a linguistic point of view and just one addition seemed necessary. The adverb 'ever' was added to strength on man's plea. As the rest of the meaning and the mood is clearly expressed by drops of sweat and crouching man on the floor.

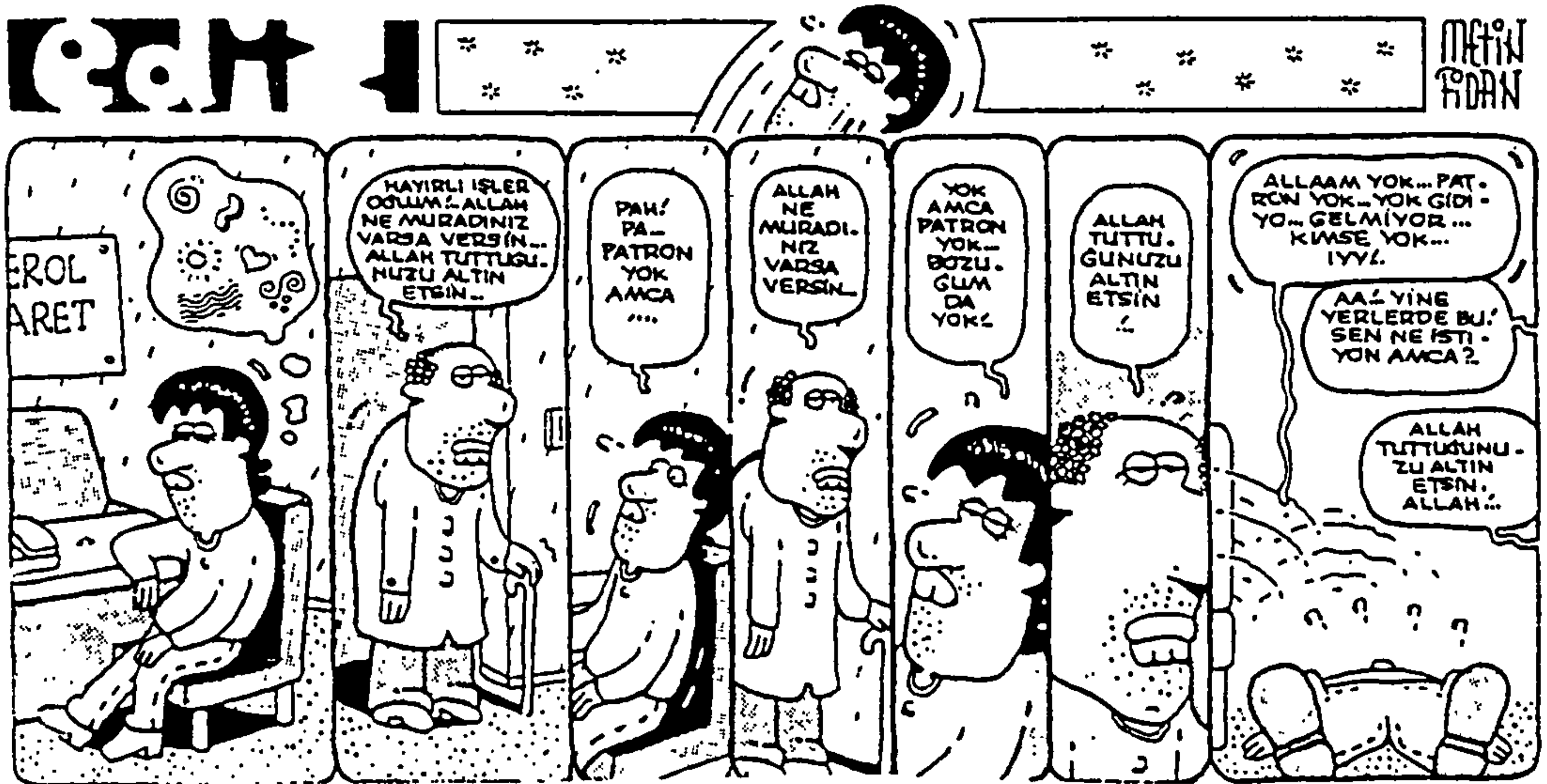


Cartoon 31

(*Pişmiş Kelle*: 31/071998)

Woman: Oh... Is this what you meant when you said you've got a bright future?
But... You're a light bulb! Just a light bulb!

The usage of "ay" and lengthening of the last syllable in "ampul" are two problems in this particular translation. The interjection "ay" is a multipurpose exclamation in spoken Turkish and usually employed by women to express particular feelings and emotions such as anger, thrill, delight, surprise and affirmation at the beginning of their sentences. One of the suitable equivalents for this interjection could be "oh" in English since one of its functions is to express a strong emotion or to emphasize what one thinks about something. As for the word "ampul", it would be better to point out that, although both pronunciations are similar, it does not have the same meaning as "ampoule" in British English. In Turkish, it literally means light bulb and may also be used as a slang word for to describe bald people. Apparently, it would be meaningless to use the word ampoule even though there is a picture of light bulb in the cartoon.



Cartoon 32

(*Leman*: 17/11/1996)

Second frame

The Old Beggar: "Have a nice day, son. May Allah be with you... May Allah open your way..."

Third frame

Ediz: "The boss... The boss is out, sir"

Fourth frame

The Old Beggar: May Allah be with you... May Allah open your way...

Fifth frame

Ediz: He's out, sir!.. My boss is out! I've got no change on me as well!

Seventh frame

The Old Beggar: May Allah open your way...

Eight frame

Ediz: Ohhh.. Please Allah help me! My boss is out... He's not in.. Nobody's around.. Ohhh..

Unknown (but probably someone who knows Ediz): Hey, he's on the floor again!... What did you want, sir?

Old Beggar: May Allah be with you... May Allah open your way...

As it was mentioned before, Ediz is probably a direct descendant of traditional Turkish shadow play. Very sensitive and shy, he can not cope with even the simplest events in his daily life and at the end he either runs away from the scene or faints. As for the translation, most problematic parts are the mutterings of the old beggar which were long became 'standards' in that field. They are basically good wishes and god's grants to mankind, which would incite pity in people and persuade them to give up some change. Some beggars, like the one in this particular cartoon, are sometimes overly insistent and would annoy people to the degree of reacting angrily. In translation, *Allah* is preferred to maintain the foreignness of the material. But one of the wishes "Allah tuttuğunuzu altın etsin" needs some sort of modification. In its literally translated form, "May God turn everything you touch into gold", it sounded hefty and unnecessarily long. "May Allah open your way" seems to include the idea of material success and its result (gold) in a more compact form. "Amca" is generally regarded as a sincere form of verbal acknowledgement. It is the most practical way for those who are not acquainted with them use the long-established standard of "amca" in spoken Turkish for addressing senior people in a friendly way. To compensate this usage in English, one way would have been to retreat to slang and choose from a pool that contained some gems such as buffer, codger or old buzzard for old man. It was also possible to pick one from the stock reserved for people in need such as parasite, freeloader, glimmer, dosser or panhandler. None of them would have been worked because the character in the cartoon above was not a bum. If he was, people would have addressed him accordingly and would not have used the term "amca" which also includes a certain degree of respect. Because of

all this, we have opted for "sir" which contains respect and the situation of not knowing exactly whom you are talking to.



Cartoon 33

(Pişmiş Kelle: 05/June/1991)

DIRTY KITCHEN

Second frame, from left to right:

- Hahahaha... We're still alive but you're gone...
- We've survived but can't say the same thing for you...
- Bon voyage, mate....

Doğan Güneş's cartoon is an example of bitter black humour. The graphics are clear enough to explain the situation and translation bears no specific difficulties except the second speech balloon in which an interjection plays an important role in the transmission of the joke. "Yürrü anca gidersin züüt" is a degrading expression used when you want to get rid off someone and roughly means "see you in hell and don't be late". The sound of "züüt" is the supplementary onomatopoeia for the same meaning and its removal would not hurt the essence of the meaning and the joke. "Bon voyage" is capable of transferring the joke in a bitter way as in Turkish because it is a biting thing to say in a funeral.

TELL ME YOUR FRIEND AND I'LL TELL YOU WHO YOU ARE!



Cartoon 34

Pişmiş Kelle: (28 December 1990)

Frame 1: Look who's comin'... Hasan... How you doin' mate?

Frame 2: I've missed you so much, man! How's your wife and children?

All well... How's yours?

Frame 3: They're all well.. How 'bout a cup of tea at my place?

Well, if it isn't goin' to be a trouble...

Frame 4: Come on in. My wife is away for a family visit. We'll have some peace and quiet.

Frame 5: Take off your coat. Make yourself at home.

Thanks.

Frame 6: Fuck it, man! We did it again but what the hell are we going to do tomorrow? We just can't go on like this. We must finish it, Hasan!

B..bb..but... Why? How?

In this cartoon, the story line is simple and does not require any extra effort from the reader. It is an exaggerated story of two male lovers and the joke/surprise does not reveal itself until the last frame. The dialog between two main characters is in everyday slang Turkish and contains some usages such as "vay efendim/how nice to see you", "kafa dinlemek/relaxation" "numarayla yırtmak/pull a trick", "ne bok yemek/what the hell are we gonna do now" and very offensive "..mına koyayım/". Fortunately, the English language is rich enough to offer some meaningful equivalents in the field of profanities.

Sex and related issues are still one of the most popular topics in contemporary Turkish cartoon and 'first night' jokes are among them. Following six cartoons are all about the "first night" and "virginity" in marriage. This topic is especially illuminating to have some information on gender issues in contemporary Turkey where the subject of a woman's virginity, as it will be seen in one of the following cartoons, could become a matter of life and death in some sections of the society due to different perceptions and approaches. In such cases, an overwhelming majority of the victims are women yet men also suffer from lack of information and experience on such matters and one of the cartoons is different than the rest in this respect.



Cartoon 35

(Pişmiş Kelle: 08/1994)

Woman: "Wooww! It didn't hurt a bit... I didn't feel anything at all.. This first night business is not as bad as I'm told... Just a slight pain, like a needle to the skin.. That's good... There was nothing to be afraid of.. I feel wonderful..

Man: Wha..? What do you mean? You should've felt a great pain! Somethin' wrong here! You... You're not implyin' my size... aren't you..?

During the translation, it was important to preserve the tones of both characters: cheerful, surprised and cynical. Man's question at the end of his talk: "Şimdi küçük mü seninki, demek istiyorsun?" is the central point of the translation. literally translation of the question "Do you mean that my penis is small for you?" lacks to deliver the tone of the joke, which is a mixture of suspicion and latent curiosity. For this reason the verb 'imply' ^{is} employed because it shows that man's fears are likely to be true.



Cartoon 36

(Pişmiş Kelle: 06/1995)

Woman: It's very kind of you to hire a juggler for our first night, Mümtaz. I'll never cheat on you till the day I die!

Man: Keep watching him and try to ignore pain when I tear your hymen off!

The problem of the tone is the only issue in this translation since it is the main provider of the joke and its absurd approach. In order to do this, there are mainly two alternatives to replace "böyle düşünmen büyük incelik Mümtaz": "how thoughtful of you, Mümtaz" or "it's very kind of you Mümtaz". The second alternative seems to offer a better sense of bitter irony to the absurdity of the scene than the first one and covers "büyük incelik" completely.



Cartoon 37

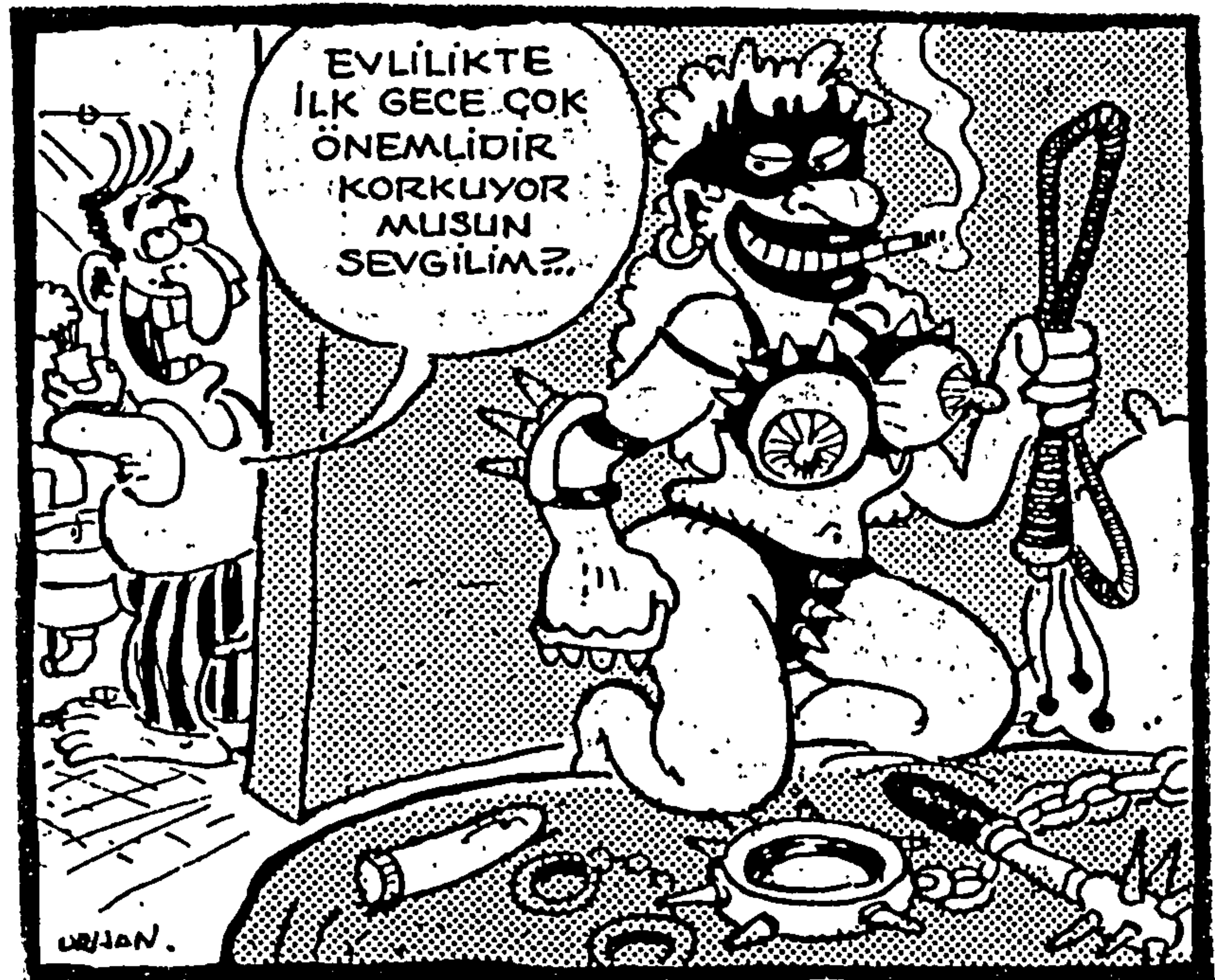
(*Gırgır*: 06/1987)

"Don't worry about your virginity my love... Some blood will definitely be shed tonight!"

The concept of "kız çıkmak" is the main problem in this translation. As we have mentioned above, being a virgin is an important value for a woman in some traditional segments of society, and if a woman is still virgin at the time of wedding, her situation ought to be declared to the members of both families. Again, in some traditionally oriented communities it was (and probably still is) a quite normal procedure to exhibit a bloodstained sheet to the curious members of the family from the opening of the door early in the morning. From this perspective, "don't be afraid if you're not virgin" would not be the accurate equivalent for "kız çıkmazsam diye sakın korkma". In "Don't worry about your virginity", virginity provides the concept we tried to explain above more clearly and the drawing itself supports it fully.

The following two examples are more light-hearted in their approach to the subject of "first night" and "virginity".

Cartoon 38



"The first night in a marriage is very important my love.. You're not afraid of it,

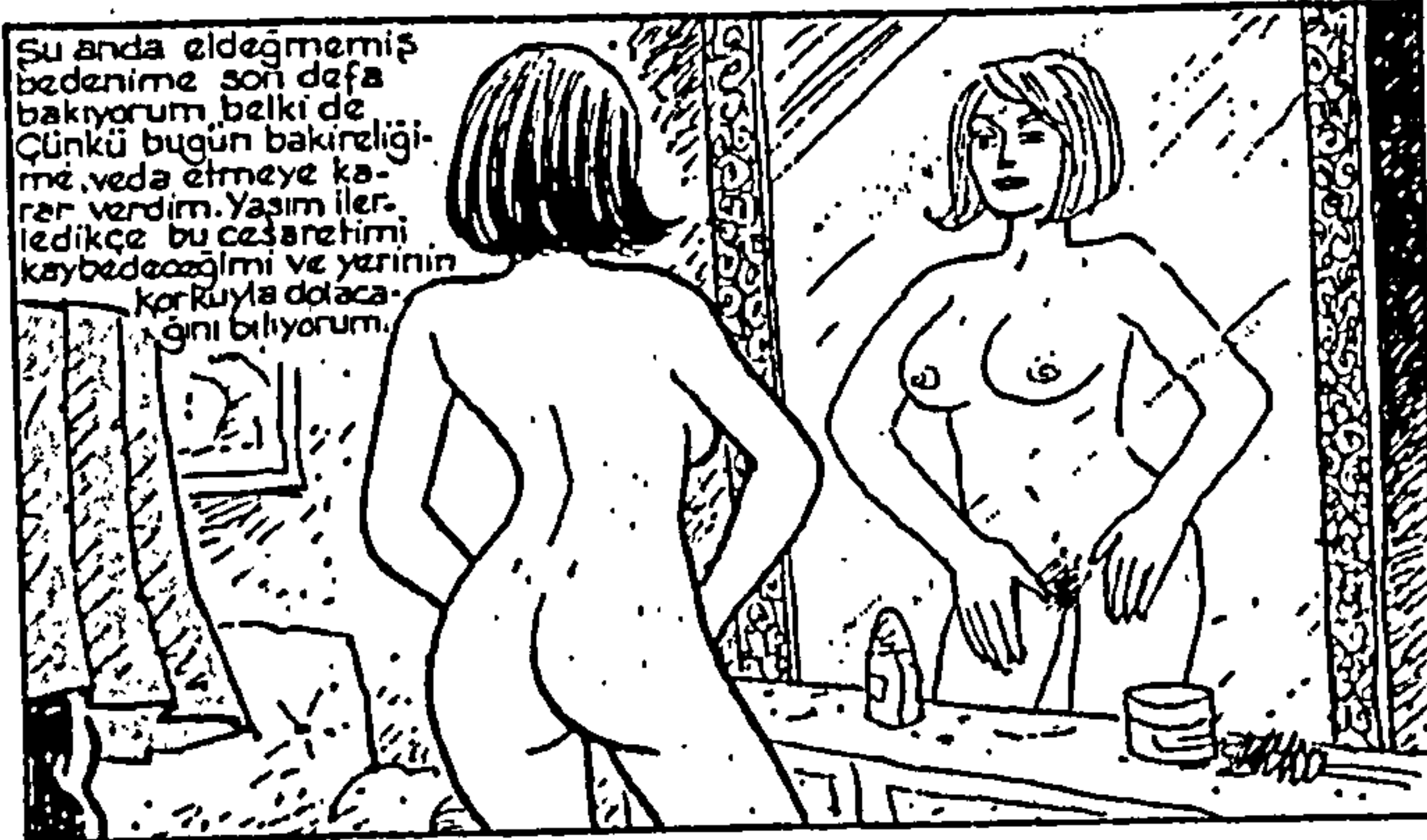


Cartoon 39

"Heelpp! Oh, my god... This man doesn't have clue about the first night at all."

In both cartoons above, there are not any significant translation problems both linguistically and culturally and subject matters can easily be adapted to other cultures which are aware of the concept (or idea) of 'first night'. In addition to this, the pictures support the whole situation and convey the joke to the reader.

The last cartoon on this subject is presented in a rather popular form employed by Turkish cartoonists. In a series of frames ranging between 5 to 8, the cartoonist tells his story in quick fashion and there is no space for character development or side-stories. The story advances rapidly and usually reaches to an unexpected conclusion. Mehmet Ersoy of *HBR Maymun* fame is one of the masters of this type of cartoon. His long lasting serial "İlişkiler/Relations" is proved to be a popular one among the humour readers. As in the cartoon below, Ersoy (or sometimes his cat) introduces the main theme and ends it with a sort of proverb. Although this particular cartoon seems to be about marriage as an institution, its starting point is women and the issue of virginity. It would also be interesting to see this issue from two (or three if we want to include the cartoonist himself) different perspectives in one cartoon.



Cartoon 40

Frames 1 & 2

Frame one

Hi there, everyone. As you've probably noticed, I've been dealing with the subject of marriage for some time. Even though it's an institution which is criticised by young people rather harshly, even they cannot escape from its logic at the end.

Frame two

Here I stand, looking at my untouched body maybe for the last time. I decided to lose my virginity. This is because, I'm afraid that I would never find the courage to do that when I get older.

Frame three

I met Gürcan this afternoon. I knew him from the college. I knew that he had hots for me so much that even a small talk seems to satisfy him. When I asked him to take me his home, he was very excited. I like him because he is both polite and sensitive.

Frame four

I was expecting him to take me to the bed as soon as we went to his place. Instead, he offered me some tea and hesitantly tried to tell that how he was in love and wanted to marry with me.



Frame five

To change his mind, I told him that I was not a virgin since I wasn't very keen on marriage. He seemed sad but somehow my situation made him more persistent. He said he just can't let me go and wanted me to think it over.

Frame six

In time, I started to find the idea of marriage more and more plausible. I knew that I'll never fall in love with anybody and Gürcan was simply worshipping me. It was quite possible that I would never find somebody who would love me as much as he did. I finally said yes and he went crazy with joy. We completed all the formalities and a date was set.

Frame seven

But when things started to get serious, I realised that there was a problem. I was going to be a perfect and trustworthy wife of someone who wouldn't tolerate even a white lie. But I've told him that I wasn't a virgin. I found someone to sort this problem out. What else should have I done?

Man in the bed: Hey! A virgin, eh? Let's get married then!

Translation wise, the text bears no specific problems since Ersoy tend to use a proper spoken Turkish in his works and his choice of words are common enough to be recognised instantly by his readers. His sentences are not over long and do not distract reader's attention from the pictures themselves. In two instances, we preferred to make two changes in frames 4 and 6 in order to transfer the meaning more clearly. In the fourth frame, the young man proposes "ıkına sıkına/with great difficulty" and the equivalent "hesitantly" can reflect the stress and strain he is in more openly. In the last paragraph, she describes his future husband as someone who could not tolerate any lies from her wife to be. The term "white lie", which is not a serious lie and just told to avoid upsetting someone, is used instead of "any lie" to describe his uncompromising personality in a more detailed way.

One other popular theme in contemporary Turkish cartoon is brothels. The main subjects illustrated and narrated in various cartoons include the first-ever sexual experience of a young, teenage man and how he feels about it. Yet, there are some occasional different perspectives such as the following two cartoons.



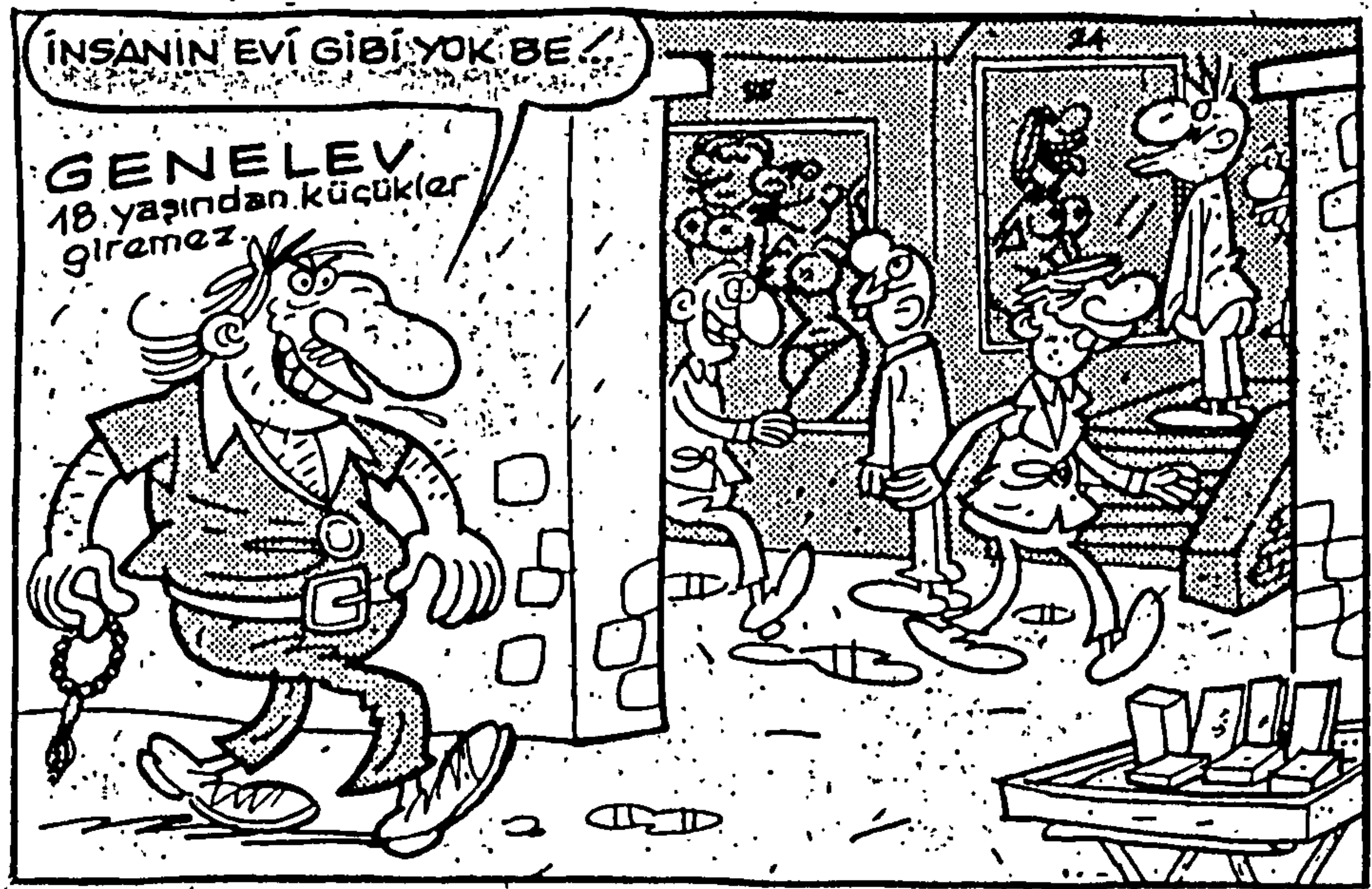
Cartoon 41

(Girgir: 07/1987)

Above the window: Brothel Number 22

"Since you've insisted so much, there she is: the first ever woman in my life!"

In this translation, it is important to reflect the difficult situation of the main character. He is in a difficult position because he must perform an almost impossible deed: taking her girlfriend (or fiancée) to a brothel to show her the woman with whom he had lived his very first sexual experience. We opted to change the structure of the sentence and used a colon right before his important disclosure in order to provide a certain amount of tension.



Cartoon 42

(Pişmiş Kelle: 12/1990)

On the wall: **HOUSE** 'Under-eighteens not allowed to enter'

"As they say, there's no place like home!"

In this translation, it is necessary to substitute interjection 'be' with 'as they say' since the interjection 'be', as used in this context and sentence structure, express some sort of relaxation and excitement at the same time. The other translation problem is more difficult to solve. Genelev (literally The General/Public House) in Turkish indicates the availability of the place, which is open to general public by the word 'genel' and it is not that far from the name's original forms: *karhane* (a place you make profit), *umumhane* (a house open to public) and *kerhane*, which is the accepted norm in spoken Turkish. Of course, it has many slang counterparts in Turkish as well as in English and one of them is 'house' which is close to what we require in this particular translation. Although

both home and house refer to where you live, home is **the** place where you live and hence "there's no place like home". It would be wrong and meaningless to provide a translation like 'there's no place like one's own house' just for the sake of obtain a suitable equivalent. It would be, then, the best move to translate 'genelev' as 'open house' but leave the speech balloon intact and trust the reader's intelligence.

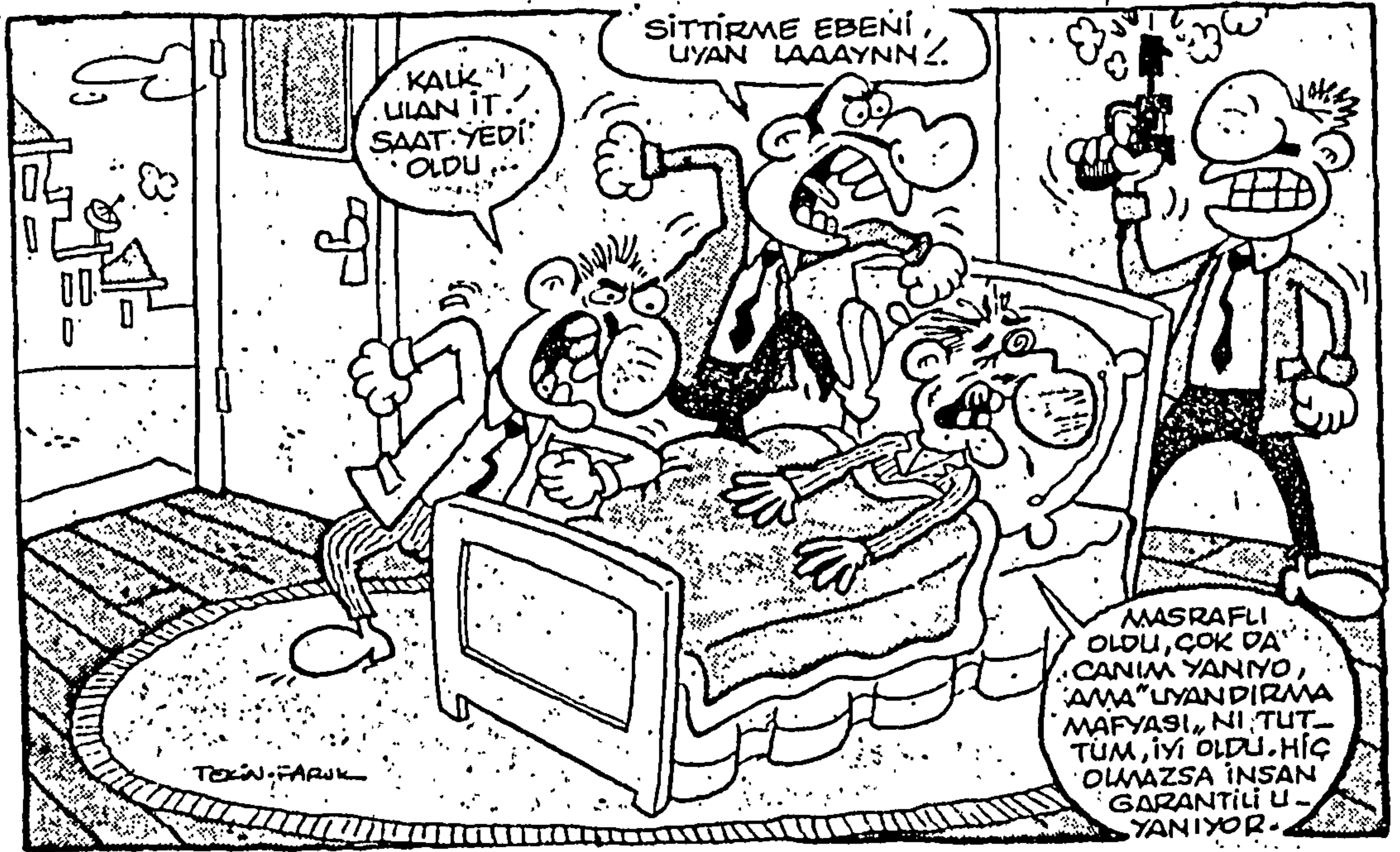


Cartoon 43

(*Avni*: 01/1990)

"Thank God. Just as I left it. You haven't changed a thing!"

This pensively created cartoon is a good example of the unity between the translation and graphic work. The text is relatively easy to translate and the story and the context in which it operates need no further rendering.



Cartoon 44

(*Gırgır*: 09/ 1986)

From left to right:

"Get up, you cocksucker! It's seven o'clock already!!!"

"Get out of the bed, you motherfucker"!

"It cost me a lot and it hurts too but this 'wake me up' Mafia really works and it's guaranteed."

An example of absurd humour from *Gırgır*, the text includes some profanity to a considerable degree. Especially man in the middle uses some really foul language but, as it was mentioned before, the English language is adequate enough to provide equivalents in this area. For "ulan it" and "sittirme ebeni" two more common and frequently used swear words are chosen to reflect the density of the insults in the cartoon. For "uyandırma mafyası", most meaningful equivalence is "wake me up" as to create the same sense when one is warned by a telephone company.

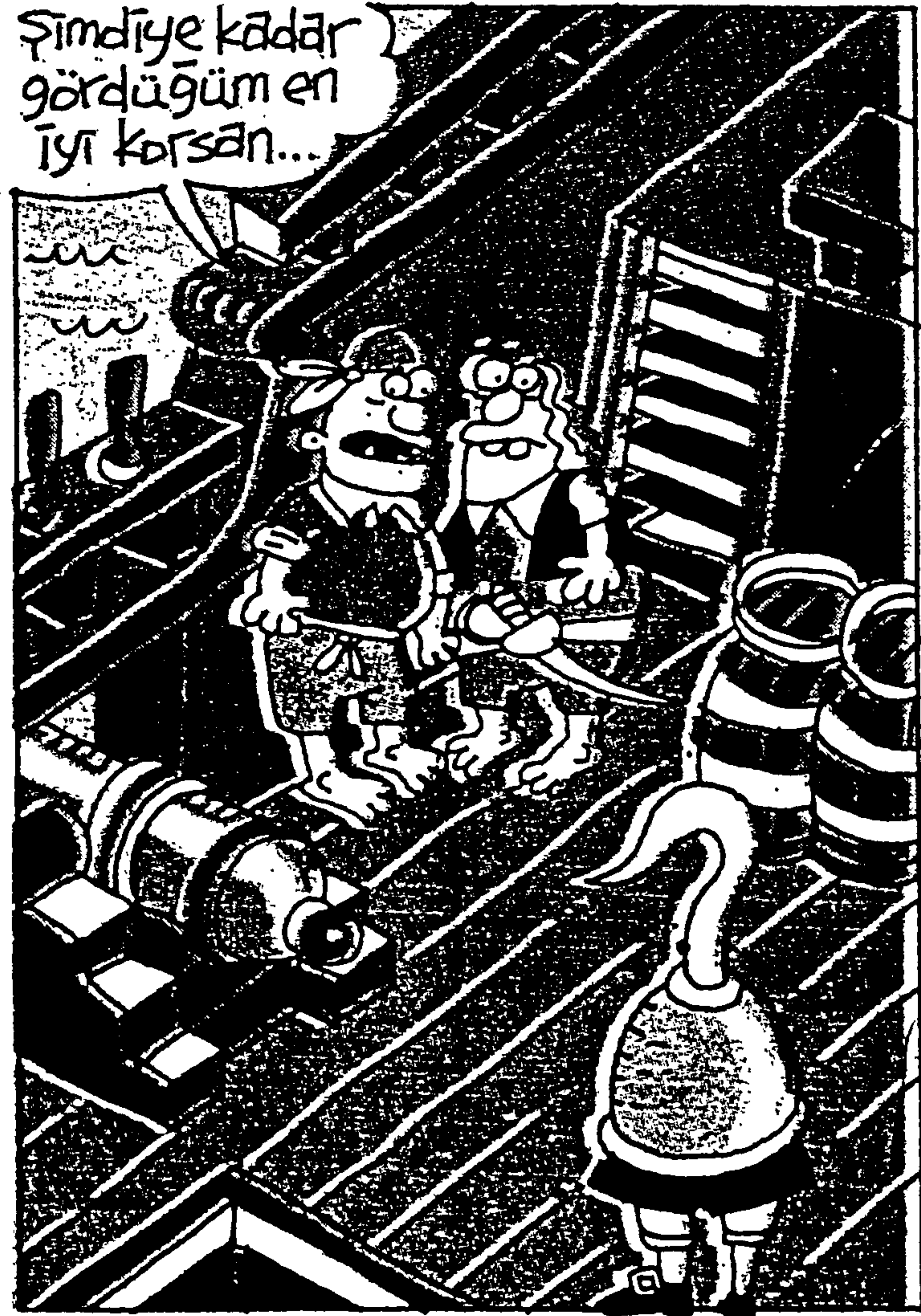


Cartoon 45

(*Pişmiş Kelle*: 05/1996)

"- Moomm! Moommm! Get up! C'mmoonnn, gett upp I said! I'm hungry, understand? Somebody fix my breakfast! Don't sleep! GET UP! GETT UP! GETTT UPP!"

Employing a similar humour along with the example above, this cartoon is far more brutal and contains detailed violence. We are not provided, as common in such single-panel cartoons, some sort of a background information on the main character. It is very difficult to determine the reason(s) behind this carnage and insanity. The speech, told in irregular spoken Turkish, is delivered by a child and should be translated accordingly by preserving the actual tone. This is maintained by using the same intermittent structure especially in the following repetitions "uyan, uyan, uyan/do not sleep" and "kalk, kalk, kalk/get up". Also, the word 'kahvaltı/the breakfast' is written as 'kahvealtı/under the coffee', most probably written to create a word play but has no function as a humour creating device since in a fast and casual reading one could easily miss that extra 'e' letter.

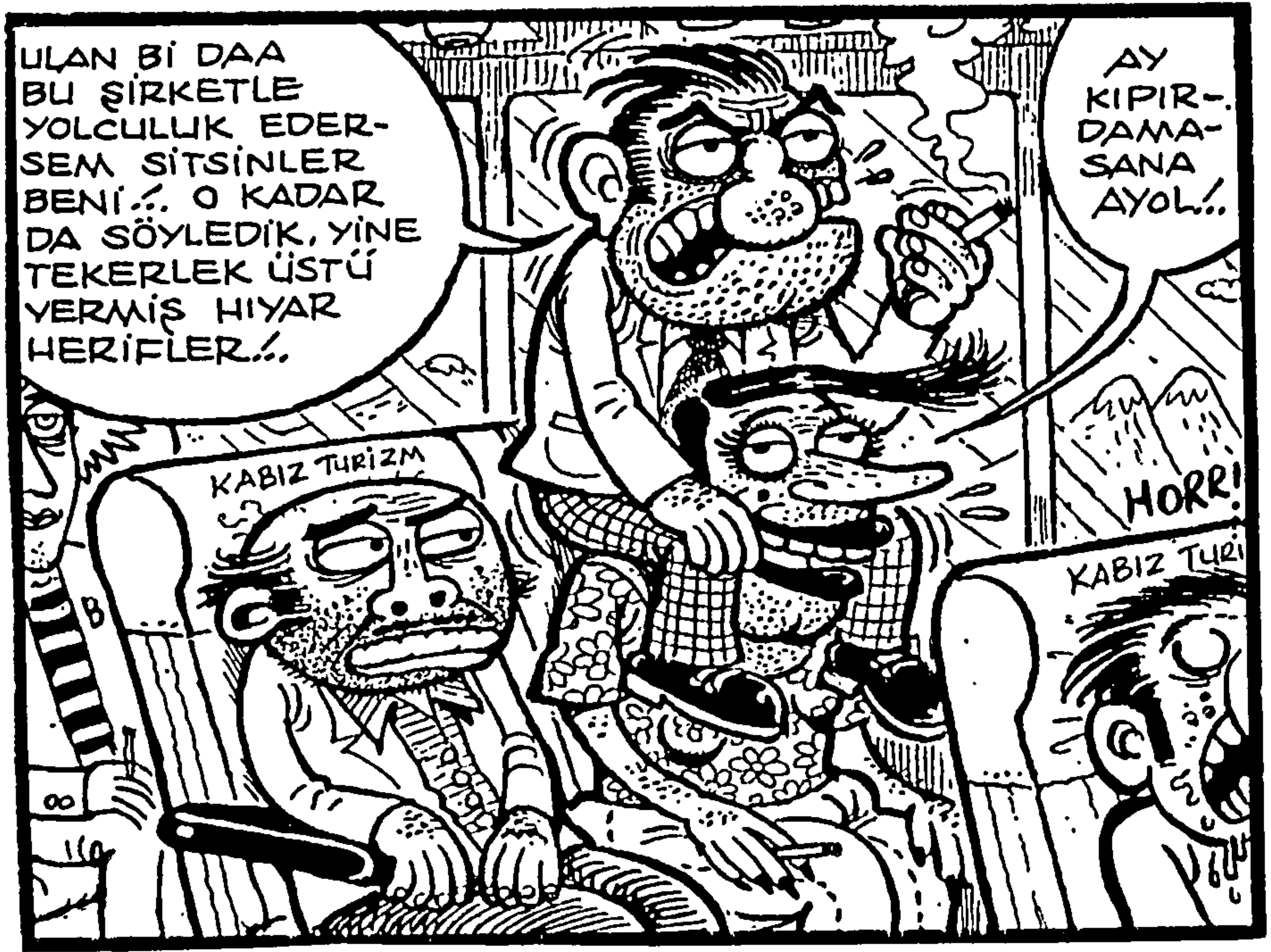


Cartoon 46

(*Leman*: 09/1998)

"He is the best pirate I've ever seen!"

Another typical example of the unity between the graphic and picture which make it easy for the reader to see the meaning and the intended joke at once. Of course, as we have tried to explain before, the cartoonist relies on the assumption that everyone is already familiar with the hook and wooden leg and would associate their symbolic meanings.



Cartoon 47

(HBR Maymun: 06/1994)

"I'll be damned if I ever travel with this company again! No matter how I pleaded, they sold me this place over a bender again, those wankers!"

"Ohh.. Please stop that wriggling, would you!"

Most important cultural reference in this politically incorrect cartoon is to homosexuals. 'Tekerlek/ a wheel' is one of those names used to describe a male homosexual in contemporary Turkish slang. To transfer this word play alongside its function in the cartoon, it is necessary to find another insult in English language, which contains more than a hundred of them. Also, a brief contextual explanation is necessary to explain why that customer finds himself in a difficult situation.

Contrary to the general practice in the UK, almost all the seats in places such as movie theatres and coaches are numbered. People could choose or reserve them beforehand under the condition of availability. One interesting (or peculiar

to some) aspect of such a practice and its extent will be examined in another example below.

Another important feature of travelling for many long-distance travellers is to avoid some particular seats situated right above the rear tyres due to the bumpy nature of most highways. It is usually possible to avert this disturbing condition by making a reservation some time before the journey.

The main problem in the text and its translation is that, a wheel or tyre do not have the same connotation in English as they have in Turkish. One possible solution would be to replace it with the noun 'bent', which also means homosexual in English¹⁶, yet 'bender' would provide the necessary association much better than these two alternatives, with the visible support of graphic, to the reader.

The colloquial 'ayol' is a polite expression mainly employed by women for minor requests from people they are -closely- acquainted with and one of the commonest interjections in English language, 'please' would be adequate for the translation.

In the following cartoon, another distressing and depraved example from ever-popular duo (Fatih) Solmaz and (Bahadır) Baruter and their regular column *Lombak*, the reader witnesses the terrible consequences of not choosing the right seat. According to unwritten rules of transportation in Turkey, it is advisable for single women passengers not to sit next to a single man passenger to prevent/avoid a likely disturbance along the journey. This supposition of a threat aimed to single women and attitude of distrust seem deeply rooted in people's consciousness and unlikely to disappear in foreseeable future. Even some reputable coach operators try their best by forewarning their customers politely

asking the same question: "Bayan yanı mı?/Is it (the ticket) for a lady?".

According to the answer to this question, they can arrange the sitting order inside the coach before the journey and prevent an unpleasant incident before it occurs.



Cartoon 48

(*Lombak*: October 1999)

(clockwise from left to right)

- Shut the fuck up! Don't move.. Ohhh, it's good...
- Nooo! Let me go, you animal!..
- Oh my... Thank God I've been seated next to a lady !...

During the translation, the installation of a paraphrased version of the question above into the related speech balloon would be sufficient for transmitting the message. The repeated interjections uttered by the terrified woman "Ay" or "Aay" are very common expressions of some feelings such as surprise, fear and relaxation and such counterparts exist in English language.

¹⁶ My main source on this issue, Jonathan Green's *The Slang Thesaurus*, (London: Penguin, 1988) uses "bent" as an adjective to express homosexuality in a general way (p.104) and as a noun especially for male homosexuals (p.116).

Following examples, from 49 to 53, of *Erdener Abi/Brother Erdener* are all taken from *Leman* magazine. Another popular character by the creator of *Öğreten Adam ve Oğlu*, Erdener Abi also follows a similar path and presents the 'adventures' of an individual who is not happy with his surroundings, especially people.

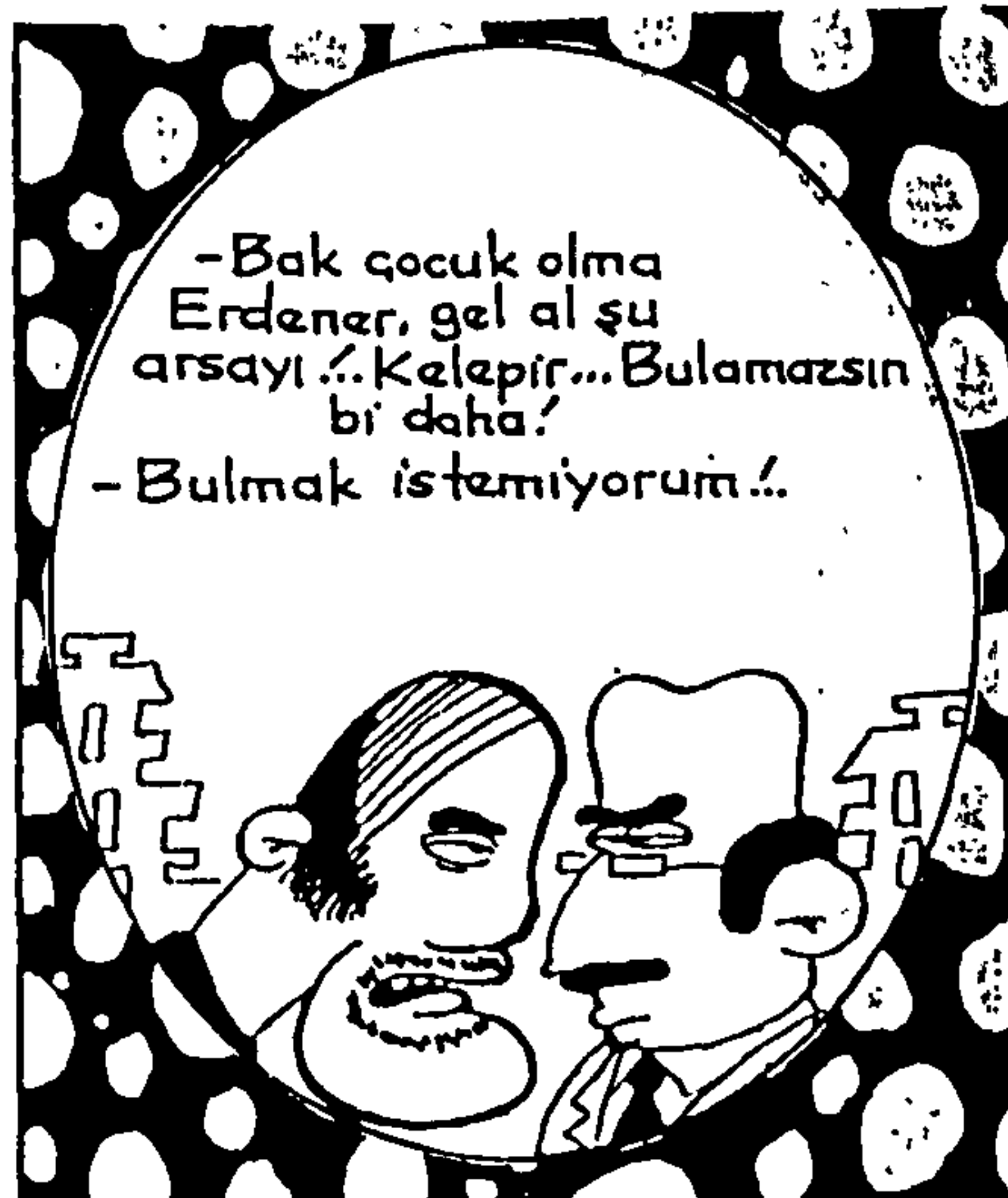
Almost all his 'adventures' are presented as episodes in circles instead of frames and there are no conventional speech or thought balloons. In each episode, there is a dialogue takes place between a 'type' and Erdener on the street. Each and every character seems to tell or demand something from him as if they all know Erdener for a long time. Erdener is always cold and keeps his distance. He never answers properly and when he talks, his replies are short, intense and his tone is always rude. This aspect of his replies never changes even for some innocent remarks as seen example 49. It is quite possible that he does not like talking at all and for some strange reason rest of the people find/assume him very talkative. Contrary to other types he encounters, his lips never moves and he appears as if he does not talk at all. He is portrayed as a nervous, retired civil servant.



Cartoon 49

(*Leman*: 04/1997)

- "Erdener, it's been rambling in my mind for some time and I decided to ask you about it..."
- "Hold it and don't make me to fart into your face early in the morning!"



Cartoon 50

- "Don't be a fool Erdener! Go and buy that land... It's a real bargain... You can never find anything like this again!"
- " I don't want to!.."



Cartoon 51

- " Well, you see... Turkey's geopolitical situation and its importance within the EU..."
- " Stay away from me or I'll crack your teeth!"



Cartoon 52

- " I don't want to sing other people's songs anymore, Erdener. I want to write and compose my songs!"
- " Don't bother me and come closer quietly!"

In general, the most important aspect in all translations is to maintain that 'rude' tone employed by Brother Erdener. Although he seems to have a foul mouth and swearing in abundance, his is a special language since they are not usual curses that one might hear occasionally. They are rude expressions but cannot easily be classified as plain swear words. It is translator's responsibility to reflect this special condition.



Cartoon 53

(HBR Maymun: 04/1991)

- " My stethoscope is broken... Instead, we're going to play Russian roulette and if something is wrong with your heart, its excitement will reveal it. Now, it's your turn!"

This particular cartoon is an another example of 'everyday absurd', a popular humour form which is frequently employed by the young generation of cartoonists. The text could be interpreted as a half-told joke that is retold in a graphic form. The language is plain, everyday spoken Turkish and there is usual absorbing of word endings, which are very common, such as "oynuycaz/oynayacağız (we will play) and bişey/bir şey (something). Apart from these minor details, the rest of the text presents /no difficulties linguistically and semantically.



Cartoon 54

(*Leman*: 04/1994)

- "Grandpa, we've got a question for you: can you name three things you'd take with you to a deserted island?
- "Those were the days... Nusret, İzzet, Ali İhsan, Fevzi, Kamuran, Cevdet... All my close friends passed away... I lost my wife last year... Your grandpa is already on a deserted island my little ones. I wish you could see that."

As it was explained above, in his *Kırık Leblebi* (The Crushed Dry Fried Chick- Pea), Suat Özkan frequently deals with elderly people and their problems. Özkan tries to show its audience that those people, no matter how old they are, still individuals and have feelings. They deserve to be treated accordingly and have the right to live as they pleased. Unfortunately, real life is not like this and those people are forced to live in state-owned in houses for elderly people or with the members of their inconsiderate families who cannot tolerate them anymore. The only good thing for these-mostly men-people in such environment is their grandchildren who are just happy to have their granddad around. The example above, though a sad one, depicts such a moment of tranquillity for the elderly.

As for the translation, two particular usages in old man's thought balloon are concern us.: "heey gidi hey" and "eniklerim". "Heey gidi hey" is a common usage to express nostalgia and yearning especially employed by elderly people when they refer to their past. "Those were the days" covers this type of reference completely. "Enik" literally means a pup, whelp or cub and used in this cartoon in a warm and intimate way by the old man for addressing his grandchildren. To provide a similar warmth and affection expressed by the old man towards his grandchildren, "my little ones" was used.



Cartoon 55

(Leman: 07/1994)

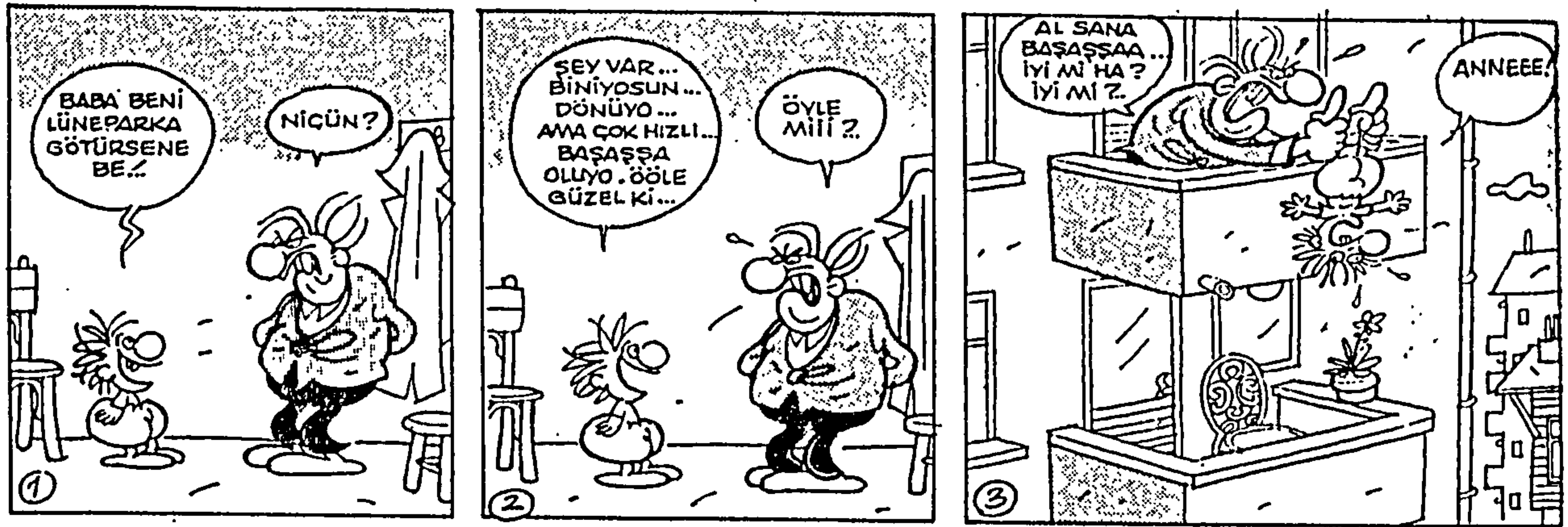
On the sign: The Philosopher

"- Sir, I'm 35 years old and my problem is that I still can't determine on a life style that would suit me".

"- I see... Tell me more about yourself!.."

Although the actual translation process is not particularly problematic, the profession indicated on the signboard in the cartoon needs special consideration. In the cartoon, we see people queuing up to take some advice from a philosopher who is selling his ideas or views to those who wish to understand themselves better. There is no such 'occupation' or 'profession' in word's vocational and formal senses in both Turkish and English languages. In Turkish, as in English, the noun philosopher basically means someone who studies and develops ideas about the nature and meaning of existence and reality, good and evil and/or teaches philosophy. But this definition does not reflect the sense of a business apart from those who are part of a academic life and earn their living. Yet, it is a common procedure to create common and uncommon professions in Turkish language by adding few suffixes such as '*ci*, *çi*, *çu* and *çü*' in front of many familiar and common names.¹⁷ To reproduce this type of tendency in English would result in many odd sounding professions and/or occupations and from the translator's point of view, it would be better to leave it as *philosopher* since both speech balloons in the cartoon would provide the necessary context for the readers.

¹⁷ This tendency sometimes comes out in most unlikely circumstances. As it was briefly mentioned above, the state owns and runs the brothels across the country and collects taxes from these establishments. The owners of the houses in these places are usually classified under the general term of "entertainment" section in the statistics. Although, as it is described in dictionaries as someone who runs a brothel, the term 'kerhaneci' does not exist (officially) neither as a profession nor occupation it has a common usage as a slang word and could still indicate one's business.



Cartoon 56

(Pişmiş Kelle: 09/1998)

Frame one

"- Daddy, can you take me to the fun fair today?

"- Why should I?"

Frame two

"- Because... there's... you know... when you hop on, it spins...but very, very fast and you go upside down and it's wonderful!

"- Is that so?"

Frame three

" - Here you are! Upside down!! Is this good for you? Tell me, do you feel alright!"

" - I want my mommy!"

The cartoon above taken from a continuing series titled "*Zalak Mahmut*" by Behiç Pek whom we have seen another example above. *Zalak Mahmut/Mahmut the Idiot* is a family man who has problems with almost everyone. He is mad at everyone, including the members of his own family. Everyone seem to get on his nerves and in his neighbourhood he has many

enemies and they either chase or deceive him in every given opportunity. The size of his wife is enormous and constitutes quite a contrast to *Zalak* himself. Whenever a member of his family wants something from him, does not matter how insignificant it is, his reaction is always tense and rude.

His nickname, *Zalak*, is probably a newly coined word, a neologism of popular 'salak/fool or idiot in Turkish and suits fine to this particular character who constantly thinks himself as fool proof, that he does the right thing all the time and painfully fails at the end. The dialogue between *Zalak* and his son in the cartoon is in everyday Turkish and contains many dropped letters in some words such as 'biniyosun/biniyorsun, başaşa/başaşağı, biniyosun/biniyorsun, dönüyo/dönüyor, oluyo/oluyor and ööle/öyle or öylesine". During the transfer of these words, as it has been done in similar examples, their equivalents should also drop one or two letters as well. To preserve the childish tone in *Zalak's* son, we preferred to use certain words intermittently.



Cartoon 57

(*Pişmiş Kelle*: 08/1995)

- "Rüstem, just admit it: you're a lazy sod! You even hire a man for foreplay!"

This example from the creator of *Zalak Mahmud*, deals with yet another aspect of sexual relationship between the sexes. The joke could be classified as a universal one, easily adaptable to many cultures with similar backgrounds. Linguistically, the sentence structure remained unchanged during the translation but 'just admit it' is added in order to emphasise man's condition further and the anger his partner directed towards him.



Cartoon 58

(*Pişmiş Kelle*: 02/1993)

- " I'm so afraid, Cemil... I'm afraid that our happiness would not last. Too much happiness scares people, if you know what I mean?
- " As if there isn't any other place to go, we come over and over here to sit at the edge of this cliff and.... well, it's normal to be scared I reckon... Sort of a fear of death... We better move back a little!"

A typical example of what old school cartoonists despise about today's humourists and their works in which they include so much writing. The language of the dialogue in this particular cartoon is ordinary, simple and spoken in plain

Turkish without any difficult words. But, similar to those words used in some examples above, the writing in speech bubbles is occasionally idiomatic and this fact makes the issue of cultural equivalence hard to achieve. In such cases, most plausible way for translation is to convert such words and sentence structures into neutral language without sacrificing the meaning, in other words to apply a semantic translation approach to the texts.



Cartoon 59

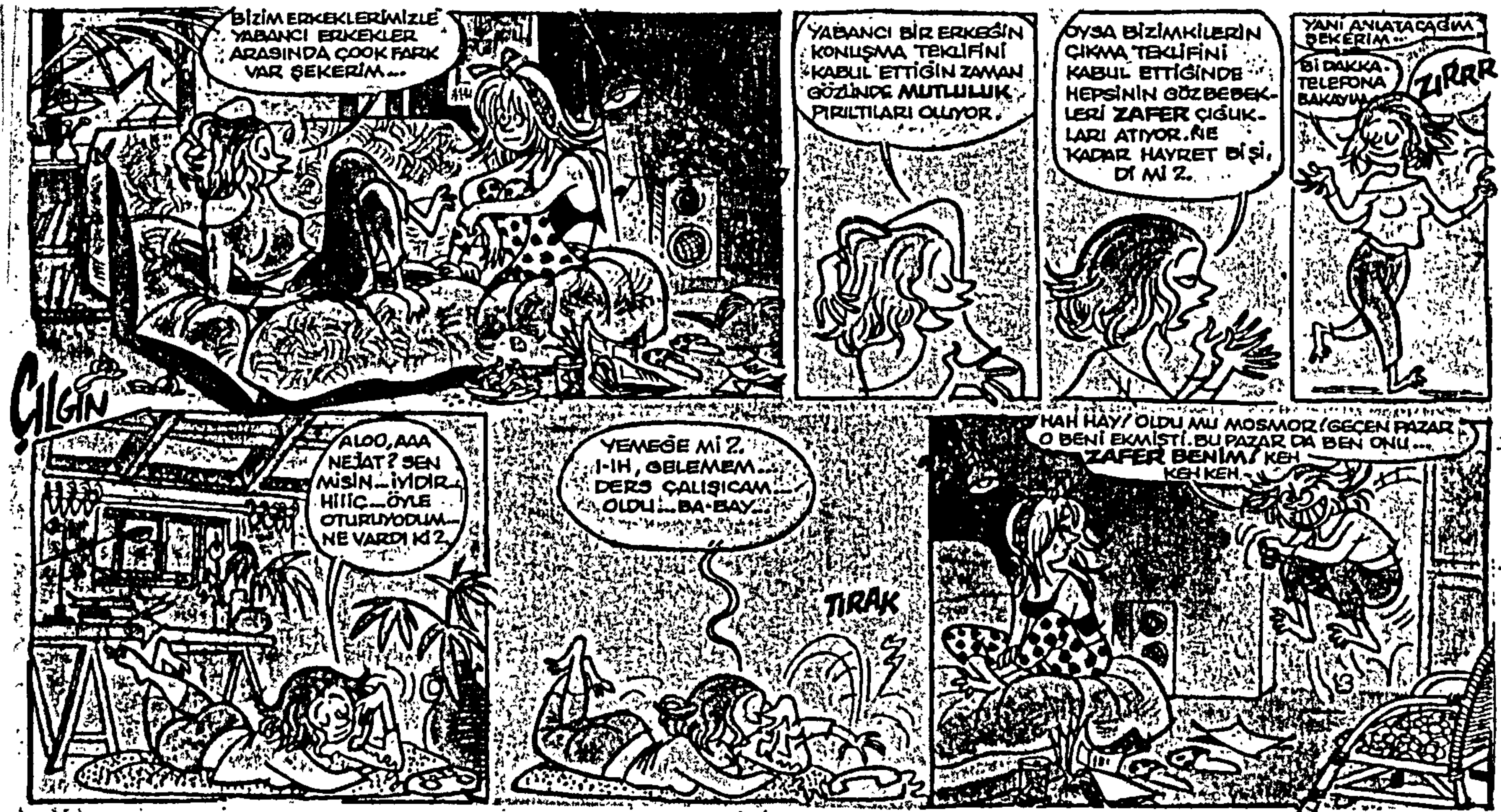
(*Avni*: 08/1996)

- " And this one's from my graduation day and these are my mom and dad... oh my God.. this loneliness is a terrible business!"

This cartoon tries to transmit its rather sad message by giving an extra information to the reader at the end of the text: "Of of! Yalnızlık ne zor ya.../ loneliness is a terrible business..". Although it is debatable whether the

prospective reader needs such additional help, the translation of this particular sentence requires attention. The interjection 'of of' in Turkish is used to express a variety of situations and feelings such as- primarily- depression/distress, pain, trouble, difficulty, boredom, annoyance, worry and even financial difficulties. Of course, in cartoons such as above, it is relatively easy to see the cause of this expression and interpret it accordingly. The English equivalence for 'of of' in monolingual dictionaries is given as 'to sigh' and does not adequately cover 'of of' since it is more than 'to breathe in and out making a long sound *especially* because you are bored, disappointed, tired, etc.'.¹⁸ Consequently, it would not be suitable to place it in place of 'of of' since it does not have the same density to reflect an atmosphere of boredom and solidity. Other interjections such as 'goddammit' or 'goddamn' just do not have enough feeling to express the character's absolute sense of loneliness and hopelessness that led him to talk to a sex toy. Even though not the best possible alternative, 'oh my God' at least manages to give the reader a strong sense of annoyance caused by complete isolation.

¹⁸ *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. (3rd edition, 1995)



Cartoon 60

(Gırgır: 05/89)

First frame

- " You know, there's a huge difference between Turkish and western men."

Second frame

- " When you agree to go out with him, his eyes shine with **happiness**."

Third frame

- " Yet, on the other hand, when same thing happens with one of our boys, his eyes shine **victoriously**!" Isn't that weird?

Fourth frame

- " What I mean ... hold on, let me take that..."

Fifth frame

- " Hello... Nejat, is that you? Well, it's fine... Nothing really.. Been lying around.. What about you?

Sixth frame

- " Out to dinner? Sorry, I can't.. I've got some work to do..

Seventh frame

- " Heeyyy! I got him! He'd ditched me last Sunday and now I've got my revenge and it is a **victory**!

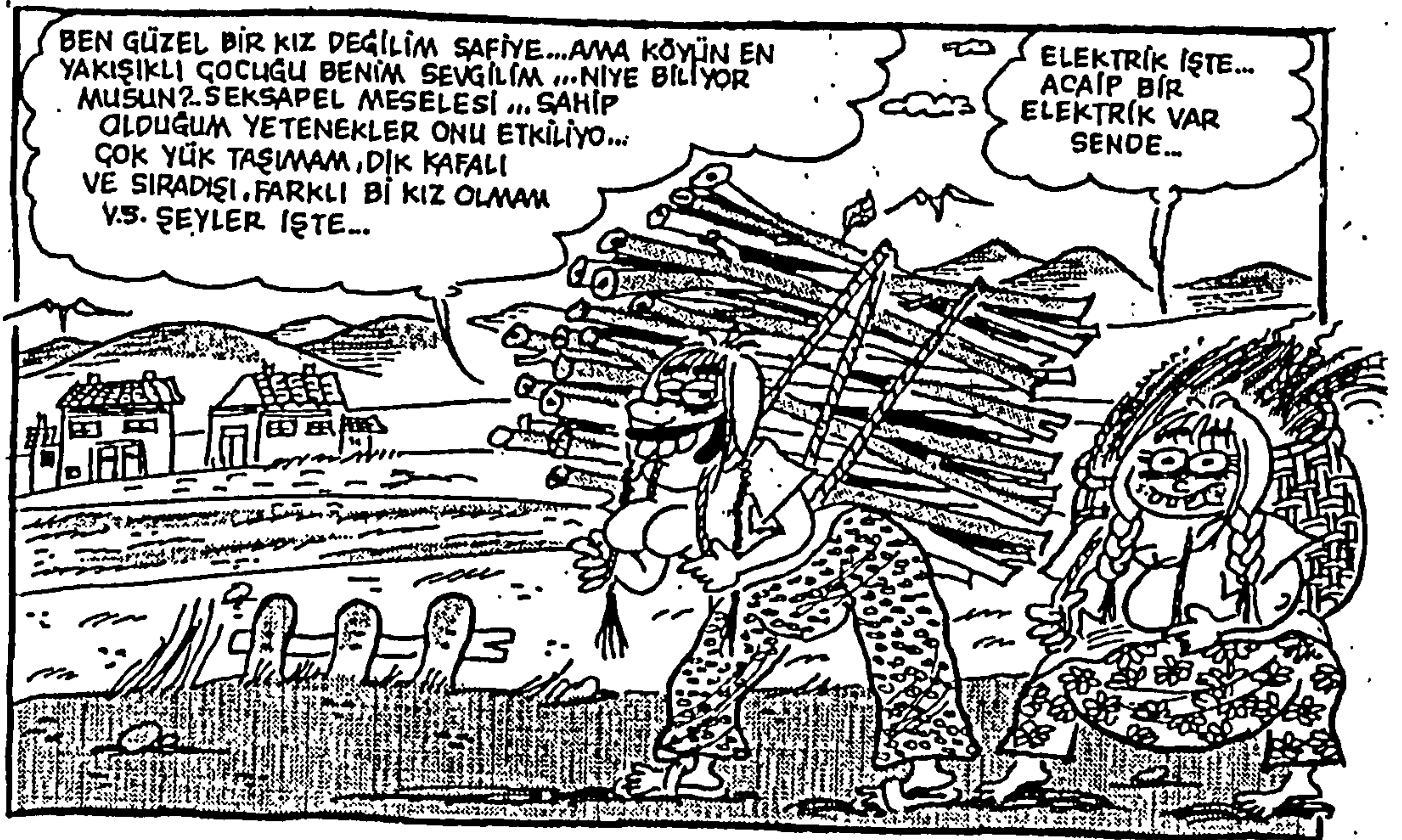
The cartoonist Özden Ögrük could be considered as a pioneer for female cartoonists working in contemporary humour magazines usually dominated by male cartoonists and humourists. It is possible to cite only two other significant women cartoonists still working actively in this field today: Ramize Erer with her popular character in a quality daily broadsheet *Kötü Kız/Bad Girl* and, as it was mentioned above, Feyhan Güver and her *Bayır Güllü/A Wild Rose* in *Leman*.

In the cartoon above, Ögrük provides her readers a glimpse into girls' world and their psyche. The whole narrative between two characters is given as one big monologue and contains some colloquialism that is especially detectable in the last three frames. Although they all have equivalents in English, it is important to choose the words that would reflect the personality of the main character and her attitude.¹⁹ Accordingly, equivalents for such words/interjections as 'iyidir', 'hiiiç', 'öyle oturuyordum', 'ne vardı ki?', 'ı-ıh', 'oldu', 'hah hay' and 'oldu mu mosmor' should be selected and evaluated in this perspective. Even a simple act of answering a telephone call radically differs in two cultures. As in the act of answering the door, both these acts are generally expressed by the verb 'look' in Turkish and a word by word approach would produce translations such as 'let me look at the telephone' or 'I will look at the door'.

Expressions such as 'iyidir/fena değil/it's good/not bad/so so/fine' are standard replies to the questions like 'Nasıl gidiyor?/nasılsın?/How is it going?/how are you?/what's up?/what you're up to these days?' and usually reflect a state of the mind. Also, there are other translation alternatives for the last

¹⁹ The title of the series 'Çılgın' (Crazy) refers to a particular character (other young girl in the above cartoon who remains silent throughout the narrative) who is somewhere being between a teenager and a young woman. Her name is Bediş (short for Bedia, one of those proper names in Turkish that is considered as traditional (or typical) by mid-upper class generation) and in most cases, she is the main attraction and events take place around her. It would be interesting to note that, a recent television serial based on this cartoon character, in which a famous pop singer played the main role, proved to be a successful one.

frame which would be more comfortable in everyday spoken English, yet it would be equally difficult to create an acceptable equivalence with the omission of 'zafer benim' which is important to show the emotional confusion of the character by contrasting her state of mind in the third frame and the last.



Cartoon 61

(*Leman/Bayır (Gülü: 1998)*)

- "You see, I'm not the most beautiful girl in this village, Safiye... Yet, the most handsome boy in the village is my sweetheart. Do you want to know why? It's a matter of sex appeal.. He's impressed with my capabilities and qualities... that I can carry a lot, that I'm a stubborn, different and extraordinary girl and such..."

- "That's magnetism... You certainly got some kind of personal magnetism..."

Even though the majority of Güver's cartoons are linguistically trouble-free, just usual amount of colloquialism and some words with their last letters dropped out during the conversations as in other cartoons published in *Leman* and other humour magazines, the reader would certainly need at least a general idea on the life in the country side. Even the issue of clothing, as seen in the cartoon

above, would require a certain level of background information since the appearance of people wearing baggy trousers are often the indicators of a story/event that takes places in the provinces.²⁰ Güver usually neutralises and trims the dialect of the region -the Thrace and environs- down into a more accessible spoken Turkish possibly to reach a wider audience. She also adds some concepts, such as alienation, which are generally associated with people living in big cities, into the dialogues of her characters.

The women characters in Güver's cartoons based on the country side are caught between their deeply rooted traditions and big city values which have started to creep into their small villages and their consciousness via television (although it is very rare, if any, occurrence to spot a television set in these cartoons). The village women depicted in these cartoons, both young and old, are vaguely aware of some other kinds of existences outside the boundaries of their sometimes unbearably simple lives in which they are usually responsible for almost all the daily work while their husbands hang around with their friends in local *kahvehane*/coffee house. They often find themselves in truly existentialist mood and painfully realise that they have wasted their lives for nothing and never became individuals in their own rights. As seen in the following cartoon by the same artist, most of the times, women have no choice but yield to brute force not only in the countryside but in the city as well.

²⁰ Sometimes appearances could be misleading since it is normal to see individuals, who come to the city as a result of heavy domestic immigration, in similar outfits in and around the outskirts of big cities. Especially women continue to wear them since the area they occupy has fast become identical with the place they have left behind and it is just normal for them to continue living under similar conditions.



Cartoon 62

(Leman/Bayır Güllü, 1998)

- 'You've been complainin' how dull your life has become lately... Do you feel it improved now?
- 'Thanks a lot! I really appreciate it!'

To reflect the element of black humour in this particular cartoon, which is mainly reflected by the female character, it is necessary to make some modifications in her part of the dialogue. "Sağol" is a very common phrase in Turkish and usually used to express gratitude upon receiving or hearing a pleasant thing. In the cartoon above, its usage adds a bitter 'tone' to the narration that is an indispensable ingredient of black humour. To hear such a reply from a woman who is brutally beaten by her husband is an unexpected development since there is nothing to be thanked for. To create a similar effect in the translation and reflect the state of woman who is depicted as scared and helpless against the threat of ^{her} his husband, it is necessary make an addition to 'thank you' or 'thanks'. 'To appreciate' could reflect the state of mind of the victim with a sense of satire.

The following cartoon is another example of humour chiefly based on cultural associations and background information and similar to the one that depicts a couple who have left the scissors running. Backgammon is one of the favourite pastimes in Turkey, especially among the male population who frequent the kahvehane/coffee-houses.²¹ It is common for people to have bets on certain games just for the fun of it. As a part of oral tradition, it is customary to tell the player who lost the game to take the backgammon board under his arm and go home to study and learn his lesson better until the next game. In the cartoon below, this tradition is taken literally and interpreted to its most extreme by depicting a character who is bringing all the boards home defeat after defeat.



Cartoon 63

(*Hıbr*: 07/90)

- Oh no! I don't believe this!! You've lost the game again, haven't you? Oh my!

²¹ 'Kahvehane' is a problematic Turkish noun and what it refers does not have a complete equivalent in English. Its roots probably lie in another kind of establishment, *kıraathane*, which is very difficult to come across in recent times. In *Kıraathanes*, the patrons were offered books, newspapers and various magazines alongside drinks and hookah. In today's pre-dominantly male oriented *kahvehanes*, people usually play cards or other games and browse through the newspapers and watch some football matches. These establishments are closer to English pubs to some degree but it would be incorrect to transfer them as coffee bars, coffee houses, coffee shops or cafes since they have almost nothing in common except being places for socialising.

In translation, in order to prevent an unnecessary repetition, the name backgammon is deleted since the necessary contextual information was provided beforehand. Expressions of being tired, exhausted and worried on the faces of both characters may function as additional information for the reader.

CONCLUSION

This study assumes that, under the light of various theories of translation and humour, humour does not always mean laughter, which is long considered as the main indicator of having fun. Not everyone laughs at the same thing or reads a text in a similar way due to different points of view. In humorous material, as far as the translation activity concerned, there are neither certainties nor rules for both the translator and the reader.

We have tried to show that if this is the case, there should be more than one suitable way for its translation. We proposed that, in order to translate a piece of visual humour, in our case examples of assorted cartoons with speech balloons from a different culture, is to inform the reader/audience with a certain amount of contextual and cultural information. Armed with this knowledge, the reader would gain a better insight and the transmission of the message would be much easier. As it was shown, the material of visual humour could be crammed with clues that would help or direct its audience to the intended joke. Yet, one problem still remains: even though a cartoon contains clues, some of them obscure and others visible, the prospective reader may still not perceive the intended message. To prevent such situation the translator should deliver the necessary contextual and cultural information, preferably before the translation in order not to alienate and eventually loss his/her reader.

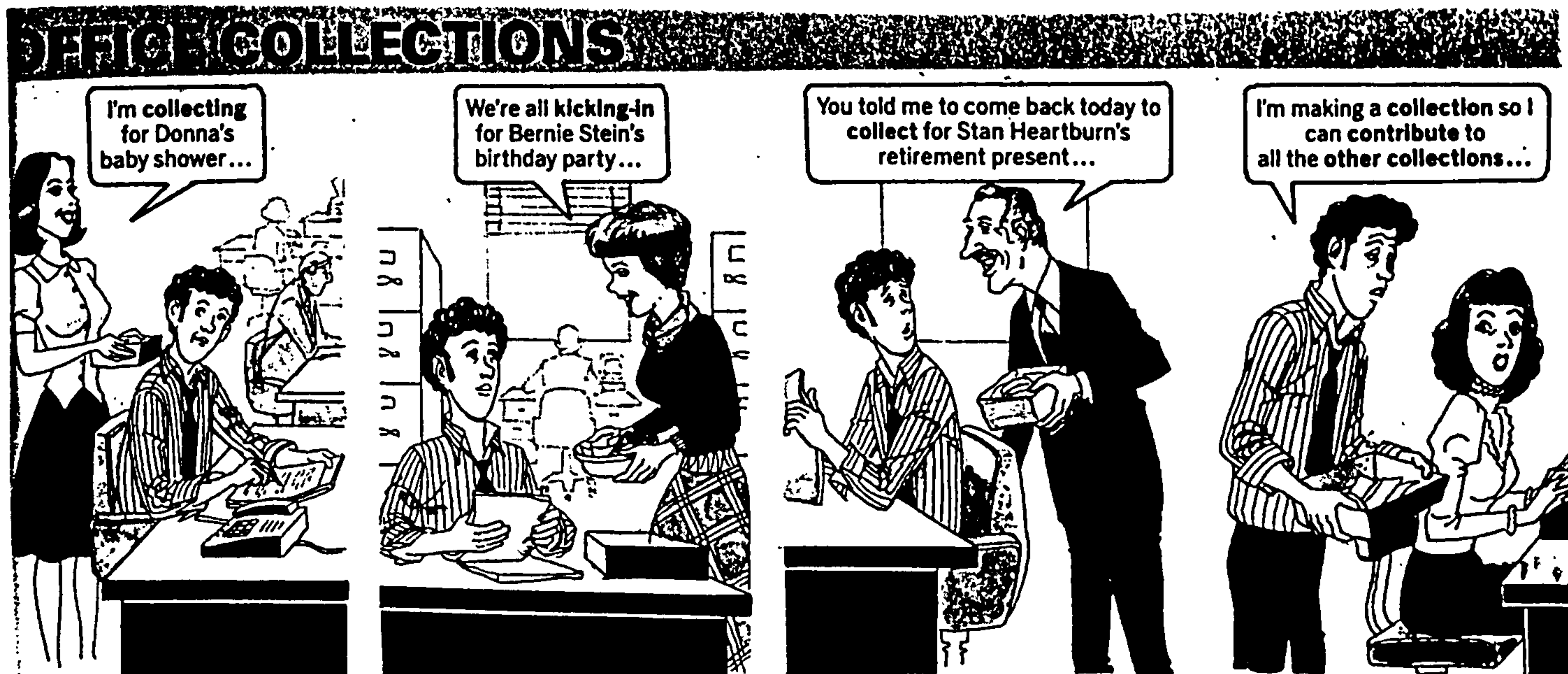
Again, to translate serial cartoon strips with a steady character might be more successful because if a precise and adequate background is provided before the translations, would give the reader/outsider a chance to understand the intended message and joke more clearly.

On the other hand, MAD, one of the best selling humour magazine in the world, spares at least four pages for a strip- panels drawn by Dave Berg called "The lighter side of..." in every single issue. In these cartoons, Berg was mainly criticising American way of life and individuals from different points of view. Almost all the strips, without exceeding four panels at most, depict ordinary people, minding their own business. Since all the stories take place in living rooms or various outdoor facilities like movie theatres, churches, markets, picnic areas, offices or classrooms, after following the series for some time, it is quite possible for a reader from another culture to be accustomed to various aspects of daily life in the States and different behavioural patterns of its citizens. Moreover, the reader would also be exposed to many graphical little details crammed into the cartoons themselves as shown in the examples below



Cartoon 64

(*Mad*: Summer 1989/ Super Special)



Cartoon 65

(Mad: Summer 1989/Super Special)



(Mad: Spring 1991/Super Special)

Since all the details it presents by way of graphics and generalisations it is quite possible to evaluate "The Lighter side of..." series as a crash course on popular American culture. Likewise, some serial cartoon strips in *Leman*, containing regular characters such as *The Man who Teaches and Son*, *The Bothered Man* and *Ökkeş*, *The Vicious Son*, and other cartoons in similar weeklies, also offer a rare glimpse of (sometimes too) real people and their preoccupations. Such cartoons could provide many interesting and entertaining cultural clues to an outsider. Apart from being important signifiers of a particular culture, humour and cartoons are also used by historians to reflect the mood or attitude that felt in a specific period in the history of a nation since such material could easily succeed to hold the pulse of the people and thus become valuable documents for researchers and other interested parties.

One of the most important problems of translation for such material is to decide on a valid profile of the target audience. The conceivable image of a (average) reader is known to be highly influential within the field of translation to the extent that translators are usually expected to translate according to the wishes or expectations of this individual regardless of his/her cultural and personal background. I find this kind of pre conditioning disturbing due to the uncertainty it causes on translator and through him/her, on the text itself. It would be irritating for the translator being in such an awkward state of uncertainty, being not so sure about his potential reader(s) profile except in certain cases like long established best selling writers or books which have been heavily promoted and bound to attract readers from a wide spectrum. Yet, when it comes to the subject of humour, the translator is in dangerous waters. The translator of such texts has to take many points into consideration before and during the translation activity such as his/her personal

contribution into the translation, additions or removals, style and taste of humour since it has always been considered a personal matter. But this dissertation considers the matter of message being the most important aspect of humour translation. It believes that, how simple and dull a cartoon looks and sounds, it contains some kind of message and tries to carry it out to its audience. A foreigner/outsider, who is interested in a different culture than his own and wishes to understand some particulars of that country, as *The Economist* magazine suggested, would find it very useful to investigate its humour by the support of some contextual information.

As it is apparent from the examples provided through the dissertation, the amount of information given before the translation can vary drastically. It is clear that there is no definitive limit in this aspect of translation yet its total absence is unimaginable in most cases. It is also obvious that, in case of jokes, it is possible to transmit the element of humour across different cultures by way of shared or common cultural characteristics. Such jokes are like popular currencies, which are valid or convertible into almost any situation and therefore do not require further explanations for their recipients. Although such explanations might sound tiresome after some time, in the long run, they are indispensable for conveying the humour/message to the reader.

One other important factor of the translation process is, as we have seen in the related chapter, the reader himself and his taste of humour. This issue has never been addressed fully yet its role is crucial as a determinant of humour appreciation.

As it was stated before, the translator should assume the responsibility of providing an adequate amount of data concerning the cultural and contextual background for the cartoon in question. The amount of this information should be

decided according to the target readership and this would require a careful consideration and assumption by the prospective translator. S/he should try to avoid giving unnecessary information and in turn corrupting the meaning of the cartoon. It would be, however, necessary for the translator to point out some little culture-bound traces that are sometimes inserted into cartoons in order to make them more vivid. Sometimes, the native audience would not even detect such traces and the translation could benefit from such indications by the translator.

To sum up, translation of cartoons could make a considerable contribution to the understanding between remote cultures even in this age of cyberspace and Internet. Since cartoons can accurately reflect situations and mentality of a nation, they could play an important role in terms of communication between peoples of different countries.

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APPENDIX 1

The original Turkish version of Soner Günday's *Orçun Kunek*.



- Demirel- Orçun Kunek'in "OH BEBEK" adlı kitabı çıktı, gördünüz mü sayın Klintin?
- Klintin - Görmez miyim Türkiye'ye gelir gelmez hemen ilk isim o oldu.
- Demirel- Nası beğendiniz mi bari?
- Klintin- Deli olma beğendim tabi, yalnız....?
- Demirel- "Yalnız ne ?" sayın Klintin, bi terbiyesizlik mi yapmış?
- Klintin- Yo hayır , bazı şarkılarını anlayamadım.
- Demirel- Öyle mi, peki hangi şarkı mesela Mistir Klintin?
- Klintin- Mesela "İki-Üç saat uğraştım Zııtt Erenköy'ün ne anlama geldiğini anlatamadım Japon turiste."
- adlı şarkı, bu şarkıyı anlayamadım akabinde bizim ülkenin en baba fingo Türkologlarına da sordum onlar da anlamadılar...
- Demirel- Şimdi bakın sayın Klintin söz konusu olan şarkıda anahtar "Zııtt Erenköy". Eğer onu bilerseniz şarkıyı da çözersiniz, açıklamamı ister misiniz?
- Klintin- Lütfen, izah ederseniz pek memnun olurum.
- Demirel- Erenköy'ün ne olduğunu biliyor musunuz?
- Klintin- Hayır bilmiyorum, nedir?
- Demirel- Erenköy bir semt adıdır. Mesela sizin Amerika'da semtleriniz yok mu?
- Klintin- Olmaz mı, semtin kuralı var bizde.
- Demirel- Bir tane semt ismi söyleyebilir misiniz?
- Klintin- Mesela Niwcörzi.
- Demirel- Güzel, peki siz Amerika'da çok hızlı giden bir aracın sesini anlatabilmek için nasıl bi şey dersiniz? Mesela biz "Araba vınnn diye gitti" deriz ya da "Herif Zııtt diye gitti" deriz.
- Klintin- Bizde eyaletlere göre değişir. Bazı eyaletler de "Araba kapooowww diye gitti" bazı eyaletlerde "Herif wiinkinnssss diye gitti" deriz.
- Demirel- Güzel peki siz ne demeyi tercih edersiniz?
- Klintin- Ben Şikogo'luyum biz "Kapoooww diye gitti deriz"
- Demirel- İy, bakın şimdi düşünün ki birisine bi şey anlatıyorsunuz, ince bi espiri içeren bir şey. Karşınızdaki kişi anlattıklarını anlayamadı, o ince espiriyi kavrayamadı... İşte sizde o an hemen "Zııtt Erenköy" diyorsunuz. Ya da Amerika'da böyle bir espiri yaparsanız "Kapooowww Niwcörzi" diyorsunuz.
- Klintin- Haaa şimdi anladım, yani bi nevi baskın basanıdır.
- Demirel- Evet tam anlamıyla öyle, baskın basanıdır mantığı.
- Klintin- Kapooowww Niwcörzi, ha ha ha!.. Şimdi AGİT zirvesinde yeni dünya düzenini anlamayan liderlere Kapooowww Niwcörzi desem olur mu?
- Demirel- Bence gereksiz olur sayın Klintin. Alınırılar malınırılar, dünya savaşı çıkartırlar, ondan sonra uğraş dur.
- Klintin- Yok canım, ben keriz miyim? Süper devletlerin reisi cumhurlarına demem sadece küçük devletlerin reisi cumhurlarına derim.
- Demirel- Tabi abi, mesela Boris Yeltsin'e "Kapowww Niwcörzi" desen adam alınır. Bakma Rusya şimdi ekonomik kriz içinde ama, ellerinde nükleer silah var, kafaya takar içer içer alkolün de verdiği cesaretle basar düğmelere, ateşler, görürüz ebemizin horekesini, hepimiz yanarız.
- Klintin- Haklısın, demem ben de öyleyse..
- Demirel- Deme boş ver ne gereği var.
- Klintin- Demem.
- Demirel- Canım
- Klintin- Abim
- Demirel- Canım.
- Klintin- Abim, gel bi sarılayım...

SONER
GÜNDAY

Orçun Kunek'in seçme Kaset ve Kliplerinden Oluşan

OH BEBEK adlı kitabı

APPENDIX 2

The Turkish alphabet

THE ALPHABET

The Turkish alphabet is made up of eight vowels and twenty-one consonants. For quickness of reference a rough guide to pronunciation is given against each letter. It is essential to supplement these indications by reading carefully the more detailed notes which follow.

Letter		Name	Approximate pronunciation
A	a	a	as in French <i>avoir</i> , Northern English <i>man</i>
B	b	be	as in English
C	c	ce	j in <i>jam</i>
Ç	ç	çe	ch in <i>church</i>
D	d	de	as in English
E	e	e	as in <i>bed</i>
F	f	fe	as in English
G	g	ge	as in <i>goat</i>
Ğ	ğ	yumuşak ge	lengthens a preceding vowel
H	h	he	as in <i>house</i>
I	ı	i	i in <i>cousin</i>
İ	ii	i	as in <i>pit</i>
J	j	je	as in French <i>jour</i> , like s in <i>leisure</i>
K	k	ke, ka	as in <i>king</i>
L	l	le	as in English
M	m	me	" "
N	n	ne	" "
O	o	o	like French <i>eau</i>
Ö	ö	ö	as in German <i>König</i> , French <i>eu</i> in <i>deux</i>
P	p	pe	as in English
R	r	re	as in <i>ribbon</i>
S	s	se	as in <i>sing</i>
Ş	ş	şe	sh in <i>shall</i>
T	t	te	as in English
U	u	u	as in <i>push</i>
Ü	ü	ü	as in German <i>Führer</i> , French <i>u</i> in <i>tu</i>
V	v	ve	as in English
Y	y	ye	as in <i>yet</i>
Z	z	ze	as in English

* Yumuşak ge ('soft g') never occurs at the beginning of a word.